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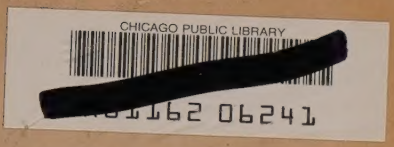

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Famous Actors of the Day

in America

SECOND SERIES

By
Lewis C. Strang

ILLUSTRATED

660 d

Boston
L. C. Page and Company
(Incorporated)
1902

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PREFACE.

THE Second Series of Famous Actors of the Day in America, has been planned to include, in the form of biography and criticism, practically a complete history of the stage in this country during the seasons of 1899–1900 and 1900–1901. In this volume, therefore, only those players have been considered whose work has brought them into special prominence within the limited period indicated. The writer expects to be called to account for including in a work on the stage in the United States articles on John Hare and Edward S. Willard, and he desires to forestall adverse comment, by declaring frankly that he has no valid excuse for such unwarranted behaviour. He wished, solely

as a matter of personal gratification, to write about these two Englishmen, both of whom are well known and much admired in this country.

LEWIS C. STRANG.

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FAMOUS ACTORS OF THE DAY IN AMERICA

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW E. H. SOTHERN.

If I had been asked before the evening of December 22, 1899, to give a concise estimate of the professional standing of Edward H. Sothern, I should have written something like this: Mr. Sothern is a man of intelligence, an actor of worthy ambition and of laudable purpose. He has climbed steadily upward from the minor beginnings of "The Highest Bidder," to the major achievements of "The Prisoner of Zenda." He has accomplished this much with dignity and without undue "booming." His reputation has

been honestly won and is thoroughly deserved. In spite of a number of unfortunate and apparently settled mannerisms, and an obvious lack of sweeping breadth of style, he is a comedian of unusual finesse, of much subtilty, of splendid sincerity, of great personal charm, and a romantic actor of grace, virility, and conviction.

On December 22, 1899, that estimate of Mr. Sothern was fair and reasonable; after December 22d, however, it was valueless. For on that evening, when "The Sunken Bell," Charles Henry Meltzer's English version of Gerhart Hauptmann's strange German play, "Die Versunkene Glocke," was produced at the Hollis Street Theatre in Boston, a new E. H. Sothern came into being in the personality of Heinrich, the bell-founder. It was not that the personation itself, even when judged in the kindliest spirit, could be termed undeniably great, — that it was distinctly excellent is a more faith-

ful characterisation; the great astonishment came from the fact that Mr. Sothern was the personator. Whereas, previous to this daring experiment, the public was fairly settled in the belief that this gracious actor was destined to portray, in the future as in the past, the inconsequential swashbucklers of romance and the entertaining gentlemen of modern comedy, on that occasion this same complacent public suddenly and unmistakably realised that there were strange and unreckoned possibilities in the man. When, in the fall of 1900, Mr. Sothern made public a Hamlet of more than merely praiseworthy efficiency, these possibilities became actualities. The new Mr. Sothern was an established fact. I, for one, am content to hand over his future into his own keeping. I make no prophecies.

Mr. Sothern began his season, in the fall of 1899, with a brassy, spectacular melodrama, called "The Song of the Sword." It

was by Leo Ditrichstein, and was no worse, perhaps, — surely no better, — than half a dozen others of the same violent class. It had the virtue of a good last act, in which, however, Mr. Sothern himself was practically non-existent, all the honours going to Virginia Harned and to Morton Selten, who gave a very effective character study of Prince Otto Louis.

In whatever light one regards "The Sunken Bell," — whether simply as a poetic fairy tale or, more understandingly, as a puzzling allegory, — its greatness as a work of highly imaginative art must be conceded. Taken as a dramatic allegory, one may read in it almost any meaning that his mind and his heart dictate. There is Heinrich, the master bell-founder, dreamer and idealist. His proudest achievement is a bell of such perfection of tone as man has never before heard. He plans to set it high up in the mountains, among the peaks, for all the world

E. H. SOTHERN

As Heinrich in "The Sunken Bell."

to hear. Alas, for human ambition! The marvellous result of his art and skill is sent by the jealous mountain spirits rolling, tumbling, clanging from the heights, finally to be lost beyond reclaim in the deep waters of the lake.

There is Rautendelein, that strange and wonderful conception of the eternal feminine, that living, free creature with control over all the wild, weird inhabitants of the mountain. They all love her, some with amorous passion like the wood-sprite, some with jealous selfishness, like the Nicklemann. But she cares for none of them. She is thoughtlessly happy, until Heinrich, borne down by bitter fatigue, seeking ever his lost bell, suddenly comes upon her. She loves him, and as proof of her love magically heals his hurts, wondrously fills his soul with fresh strength and youthful vigour, and willingly leads him to the heights, fit and ready for mighty deeds.

Ah, but he has wife and children, neighbours and friends, this Heinrich; and although he can feel surging within him lofty and enduring purposes, a splendid capacity for great things, he cannot wholly forget those whom he has left below. Still, the arguments of the pious, narrow-minded vicar, who comes to Heinrich in his retreat, cannot turn the bell-founder from Rautendelein, nor from his new labours. Yet the visit troubles him, makes him harsh and irritable, disturbed and fearful. Neither can the brute force of his neighbours, who would carry him away, even kill him, change his resolution. Then come his two little sons, and stern purpose is weakened. Former ambitions and ideas crowd in upon him. He hears the pealing voice of the sunken bell. At last he is conquered. He drives Rautendelein from him, and turns back to the old life.

The end? Simply the inevitable, the fated destiny of all, who, having found the light,

try vainly again to live in the darkness. Heinrich is not long in perceiving that, after the glories of the heights, he can never readjust himself to the minor things of the valley. Wearily he climbs upward again, searching for his Rautendelein. It is too late. She, despairing, has been claimed by the Nicklemann. Life, after this, holds nothing for the heart-broken Heinrich, and he dies gladly. But as he dies there shines upon him — marvellous comforter — the bright sun of promise and cheer. For, is it not true, those who have once attained the heights, even if only to fall from them, are infinitely more worthy than those who have never striven at all?

Three moments in "The Sunken Bell" stand forth over all others in stage effectiveness. They are the climaxes of the second, third, and fourth acts. The second act of the drama shows the final enthrallment of Heinrich by Rautendelein. This elfish creature,

loving with pure freedom and frankness the mortal Heinrich, whom she has found near her fountain home crushed beneath his misfortunes, gains access, in the disguise of a village maiden, to the house wherein Heinrich lies sick unto death. Left alone to care for him, she heals him by her magic arts, sends the blood coursing through his veins with renewed vigour, and by her kiss reveals to him world wonders of which he has never even dreamed.

While he is rejoicing in his newly acquired strength, while he is proclaiming his freedom, his wife enters. She is amazed and delighted at the change in her husband, and flies to his arms; but his eyes are fixed, not on Magda, but on the alluring Rautendelein, who, her face shining with uncanny radiance, beckons him to the heights above where is her home. The lighting of this scene in the Sothern production was superb, and under an almost ghastly brilliancy the features of Rautendelein

stood out with a gleam that of itself suggested the supernatural.

The climax of the third act brings one also to the climax of the play. Heinrich is in his mountain retreat, masterful and self-confident. He is busy with his great work, unassailed by doubt and without fear of the future. The vicar, good and sympathetic, even if narrow in his outlook on life, seeks the bell-founder and recalls him to wife, to children, and to old friends. But Heinrich is steadfast to his new ideal. He answers the vicar, argument for argument, until at last the good man, his patience well-nigh exhausted, touches the weak point in Heinrich's armour, the clinging influence of the old ideas, an influence never wholly eradicated. "The lost bell shall ring again! Then think of me!" exclaims the vicar. From this moment Heinrich feels apprehension and the loss of faith in himself closing in upon him.

The end of the fourth act shows the com-

plete subordination (for the time being) of Heinrich to his weakness. It is a condition reached gradually. At first he is irritable and vexed over his work, and he abuses the gnomes, his helpers. When he sleeps, doubt and terror overpower him, and for a time not even Rautendelein can calm him. In the exultation of hand to hand conflict with the villagers, he temporarily regains his boldness of spirit, but the sight of his two little sons, bearing an urn full of their mother's tears, undoes him completely.

Then the bell tolls! And how its ominous crashings reverberate! They make one shiver. "The bell!" cries Heinrich, — then to Rautendelein: "Back, lest I strike thee! I come!" he shouts, and not heeding Rautendelein's "Stay, Heinrich, stay!" he tears himself from her and rushes down the mountainside. "Lost, lost for aye!" is Rautendelein's lament, and through it all the bell, the pitiless bell, booms unceasingly.

We Anglo-Saxons — to adopt Mr. Dooley's classification — are a prosaic-minded folk. We do not people our woods and our mountains with sprites and elves and gnomes; we have no water-spirits and no fairies. We, in our superior way, laugh at all these things as childish fancies, wholly unworthy the attention of serious grown-ups. Once in a century, possibly, the masterful imagination of a Washington Irving will force his mystic creations on us, and we are almost deluded into believing that the thunder peals, rolling and echoing through the Catskills, are really the sounds made by Hendrick Hudson's weird sailors playing at tenpins. But Washington Irvings have not been common enough to have made any general impression on the race tendency toward unpoetic skepticism. Therefore, Hauptmann's drama, which, without any warning to many of the individuals in the average audience, plunged immediately into the atmosphere of a Hans

Andersen fairy tale, left in its wake, as it journeyed through the country, mystery and puzzled bewilderment. Waterman and wood-sprite, queer little white-bearded gnomes, beautiful fairies, and, more than all else, the indefinable Rautendelein, proved strange, inexplicable and foolish things. Still, popular approval of Mr. Sothern's production was not wholly lacking, for the beauty of the scenery appealed to those who were untouched by the beauty of the play.

In spite of the fact that Mr. Sothern fell far short of realising in full the possibilities of Heinrich, his portrayal of the difficult character was unquestionably the most serious and the most worthy work that he had done up to that time. He clung close to the earth throughout, but he succeeded marvellously well in all passages that required force and power. With the simple poetry he was far less successful. His reading of the lines — his elocution — was certainly poor, judged

by any ordinary standard, but on this point, if one but remembered Mr. Sothern's common trick of cutting his speeches into lengths, which he snapped out with the explosiveness of a whip-crack, he could the better appreciate how much attention the actor must have given to his speech in preparing for "The Sunken Bell."

The Sothern Hamlet was first shown in New York on September 17, 1900, and when one perceived the actor's astounding advance as a serious actor in the few months that had elapsed since his first performance of "The Sunken Bell," one could do no less than accord him the tribute of both amazement and wonder. Mr. Sothern's Heinrich, as a sustained effort, was not at all as meritorious as his Hamlet. He acted Heinrich in flashes; his Hamlet, on the contrary, never fell to decided mediocrity, and more than once it whirled into passion and power. Mr. Sothern's chief technical fault was still

his reading, but even this was far from bad. Certainly he never read any lines with a general excellence that approached his reading of Hamlet.

The acting version of "Hamlet" used by Mr. Sothern divided the play into five acts and twelve scenes. Five of these scenes were in the first act, which closely followed the book. Act II. passed wholly in a room of state in the castle, and ended, of course, with the familiar business of Hamlet's composition of the lines for the play. The first scene of the third act took one through the play, and "'Tis now the very witching time of night" soliloquy. The scene in the queen's closet followed. Act IV. left Hamlet out entirely, and was occupied with the madness and death of Ophelia, and the return of the fiery and revengeful Laertes. The first scene of Act V. showed the churchyard; the second scene a balcony of the castle, where the summons for the treacher-

ous fencing match with Laertes was received; the third and final scene depicted the tragic denouement.

Only two unusual omissions were noticed, — the first surprising, but by no means unwarranted, in a case where the saving of time was so important. This was Polonius's long speech of advice and farewell to Laertes on the latter's departure for France. The second omission was both surprising and, according to my view, unwarranted. Mr. Sothern erased completely the scene wherein Hamlet finds Claudius, the king, at prayer, and starts impulsively forward to kill him, then hesitates, and finally excuses himself from the deed by declaring that he will not send the murderer's soul to heaven by cutting him down while he is at prayer. Not only is this scene an extremely effective one theatrically, but it is ordinarily regarded as an important one in the exposition of Hamlet's character.

Regarding the scenery and general setting of the play, it would be churlish not to accord the highest praise, for everywhere was in evidence a high ideal, artistic purpose, and excellent taste. Personally I should have enjoyed a trifle less elaborateness and a trifle more speed.

Without argument, one took the Sothern Hamlet seriously, which in itself was a great compliment to the actor's work. One felt instinctively that Mr. Sothern was labouring enthusiastically, intellectually, and honestly to realise an ideal that had been fixed high enough to demand from him the most strenuous and the most constant effort, and to earn for him the fullest encouragement and the most helpful coöperation. Of the many diverse personalities that voiced their opinions of Mr. Sothern's Dane, not one had the bad taste to treat his personation in a flippant or depressing manner. Indeed, the tendency was to overpraise rather than to undervalue,

with the consequent danger of causing the recipient of this pleasant approbation to rest too contentedly satisfied with those laurels already his.

Considered merely as an exhibition of acting, the shortcomings of Mr. Sothern's Hamlet were minor and unimportant, — faults that continued practice and increased facility would, to a large extent, remedy. But Hamlet, it should be remembered, is far more than a study in acting. Hamlet is the most complete, and consequently the most complexed and most puzzling, character in imaginative literature. Hamlet is a man, and until an actor has embodied this humanity, until he has sufficiently mastered to make them perceptible to others, the extreme subtilties of character and of motive which, working one on another, result in the strange creature of hesitancy and inaction that Shakespeare drew, he can scarcely be said to have more than hinted at a possible Hamlet. Mr.

Sothern's conception was still in shreds. He believed that Hamlet was sane and that he was naturally light-hearted, tender-spirited, and lovable, that his mind bristled with intellectual conceits, odd paradoxes, and sardonic humours. Excellent were all these as trappings and decorations, but they by no means suggested an answer to the fundamental "why," which is the Hamlet enigma.

One general statement covered Mr. Sothern's impersonation most thoroughly. His Hamlet was decidedly a noteworthy performance, considered in detail; regarded as a whole, however, as a study and exposition of character, it was by no means wholly satisfactory. I could — anybody could — have picked flaws in Mr. Sothern's action from scene to scene, and these flaws were mainly to be found in his reading of the lines. Nevertheless, the Sothern Hamlet from scene to scene was powerful acting. Sothern, too, had done wonders in reading during the year,

— this whilom comedian with the halting, gasping speech, — but he had not yet gained full control of his vocal machinery, nor fixed absolutely in many instances on the proper words to be emphasised in his speeches. Sothern's whirlwind of speech several times resolved itself into a meaningless mess. But these lapses were very much the exception. Generally Mr. Sothern read with understanding, force, and poetic charm, and at the same time he maintained a fairly rapid tempo without exasperating or sentimental dragginess.

In pantomime, Mr. Sothern was notably good. He was satisfied with comparatively few introductions of new business. The scene of the first meeting with the ghost, especially Hamlet's fierce command to his friend to unhand him, was genuinely thrilling. The "To be or not to be" soliloquy was given remarkably well, and the parting with Ophelia immediately after, was presented in

a fashion both intelligent and interpretative. The interview with the Queen was pitched, perhaps, on too high a key. The business in the duel scene of the last act was ingeniously and naturally managed. The King's death was contrived in the midst of a moving frenzy, and Hamlet's final moments were impressive. In all the scenes where Hamlet's sarcastic humour and satirical wit found play, Mr. Sothern was very effective, while his passionate moments passed always without a suggestion of weakness. The final tragedy was accomplished, if not with tremendous force, at least with a pathetic power that was not to be denied.

In detail, then, Mr. Sothern's Hamlet earned honestly warm praise and generous admiration. What it lacked, however, was personality. What manner of man was this Hamlet? Why was it that he talked so much about killing the King, later seemed to forget all about his necessary revenge, and

at last only accomplished his purpose by the merest chance? I confess that I could not answer these direct questions after seeing Mr. Sothern's performance. Mr. Sothern has to a degree mastered the technical difficulties in the presentation of Shakespeare's great character. It still remains for him to portray Hamlet as a man, as a human being, a task that will demand all his sympathy, understanding, instinct, and knowledge of human nature.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN DREW IN COMEDY AND ROMANCE.

HADDON CHAMBERS'S comedy, "The Tyranny of Tears," which was presented in this country during the season of 1899–1900 by John Drew, was originally acted at the Criterion Theatre, London, on April 6, 1899, with Charles Wyndham as Mr. Parbury. In the summing up of the dramatic record of 1899, the play was pronounced by a number of the London critics as the best of the year, next to Arthur W. Pinero's "The Gay Lord Quex." It is true that "The Tyranny of Tears" was by no means as brilliant a specimen of dramatic construction as "The Gay Lord Quex," and because of this positive brilliancy "The Gay Lord Quex" will un-

JOHN DREW

As Richard Carvel in "Richard Carvel."

doubtedly outlive "The Tyranny of Tears." Nevertheless, Mr. Chambers's play had one great merit that the Pinero play did not possess: "The Tyranny of Tears" was thoroughly real.

Those whose ideal of dramatic art is absolute sincerity and artistic fidelity to truth found much to admire in "The Tyranny of Tears." Still, if one were disposed to find fault with the play, he could reasonably do so on the score of over emphasis for the purposes of stage effect. Particularly was this true of the character of Mrs. Parbury, the tearful wife, whose domineering selfishness was carried too much to extremes to be thoroughly trustworthy. However, this fault and one or two others of a similar nature were, comparatively speaking, minor matters, for the play, as a whole, was strongly realistic. Its theme or its problem was an easily understood, and by no means rare, social condition, a condition, too, that

was, in every light, fair prey for high class comedy.

Mr. Chambers's treatment of his theme was to a considerable degree free from the usual conventionalities of the stage. He succeeded in presenting an easily recognised social problem in an unusually natural and satisfying way. In dealing with his material he evinced honesty, and, as a reward, he secured convincing force that was really remarkable when one considered the comparative flimsiness of his general scheme and the telltale obviousness of some of his construction. This obviousness of construction was a serious blemish. In his desire to be perfectly clear, he was given to explaining too much and to preparing the way too carefully. I recall, for example, the obtrusive dusting of Parbury's photograph by Miss Hyacinth Woodward in the first act. Of course, that was a preliminary move to her kissing the picture in the second act. But the first

action, as introduced by the dramatist, struck one as unnecessary, and therefore as inartistic.

The theme of Mr. Chambers's drama was domestic selfishness, — in this particular case on the part of the wife, a personally attractive woman, who loved her husband devotedly, and who in turn was devotedly loved by him. But she was immensely fond of having her own way, and her method of getting it was to weep softly into her lace embroidered handkerchief and sobbingly to inform the tender-hearted, easy-going husband that he no longer cared for her. He could not bear to see her cry, and he therefore always succumbed to her will with repentant grace. Gradually his "before-marriage" friends ceased to visit him. He was no longer a frequenter of his club. Even the privacy of his working hours — for the poor fellow was an author and had no down-town office to which he could flee — was disregarded.

The pleasing young woman who acted as his private secretary and amanuensis, and whose tacit sympathy Parbury found an unconscious support and stimulus, alone perceived his position, and pitied him, much as one would pity a misunderstood and unhappy child. It was this pity which led her in a moment of abstraction to kiss her employer's photograph. Unfortunately, the wife saw the act, naturally enough became angry, and told the girl that she must leave the house. The secretary, however, refused to take her dismissal from the wife, and the man, knowing nothing of the kiss, — for the wife, in her self-sufficient knowledge of male human nature, feared that the truth would prove disastrous flattery, — refused to part with his assistant. "Either she must go, or I will," declared the wife in the midst of her customary shower of tears. "She stays," insisted the husband. Thus the die was cast. The episode of the kiss was forgotten,

and it became a pitched battle for domestic mastery between the husband and the wife. The conclusion — and properly so in this particular case — was the rout, foot, horse, and dragoons, of the wife.

With a background so genuinely meritorious, Mr. Chambers needed only to provide characters that reflected life, in order to place his drama on an artistic plane perceptibly higher than that occupied by the average modern comedy, and character drawing proved to be Mr. Chambers's strongest point. He peopled his play with human beings, each one of them an individual, and not one of them wholly divorced from human fellowship. There were only five personages, but every one was worth while. In his presentation of Mr. Parbury, Mr. Drew was in his best light comedy vein. His humour was abundant, and his occasional touches of pathos were delicate and free from mawkishness. It was not a part, however, that

tasked Mr. Drew's resources to any great extent, and it showed him in no new or strange light. This last accomplishment was left for the romantic "Richard Carvel."

Edward E. Rose dramatises a popular novel with all the enthusiasm and the skill of a small boy vigorously employing all the implements in his first chest of tools in the manufacture of a chicken-coop in the back-yard. If one could be quite sure that Mr. Rose took himself seriously in his perspiring attack on good sense and credulity, one might be disposed to scold a bit at an effort which expended itself as futilely as if one were blowing with a bellows against a healthy and wholly unconscious March wind. But the workmanship and effect of that which Mr. Rose so trustingly put forth as a play were so blatantly crude and palpably childish that one had to suspect, for the comfort of his own peace of mind, a coloured gentleman in the woodpile, possibly a good-natured joke on

Mr. Rose's part, or a hidden jest or a subtle burlesque.

At least so it seemed to be with his dramatisation of Winston Churchill's "Richard Carvel," which John Drew presented during the season of 1900–1901. What could have been more deliciously funny, for example, than the climax of the third act, — the fierce clashing of swords by the dauntless Richard and the treacherous Duke of Chartersea, the nipping of the duke in his own trap, the onslaught of his riotous, drunken guests, the frantic flight of Richard up the stairs, arriving in desperate haste at the high window just in time to catch the spot light just before the curtain went down?

That scene was Mr. Rose all over, — machinery frankly oiled in full view of the spectators; set in motion with all the flourishes of a trapeze performer in the circus, calling attention to an especially hazardous feat; running its brief period with a clang and a

rattle and a bang that were substitutes for dramatic action, and ending with a rush hither and thither, and a spot-light climax!

In a word, then, "Richard Carvel" was a very ordinary melodrama, produced as if it were something different. Its merits were action and colour, and it interested one just as long as he refused to think. With the story as a whole, one had little or nothing to do. In fact, it is doubtful if one could have found a story as a whole if he had taken the trouble to search for it. There was a love-affair between Richard and Dorothy Manners that lasted through the four acts, and wound up finally in a farcical wooing, at which the audience laughed joyously. But really, Richard's love, and Dorothy's troubles, and the duke's wickedness, and Mr. Manners's despicable cowardice, — none of these amounted to much. All that counted was what happened this minute. Mr. Rose's admonition was, "See, forget, and promise not to anticipate."

Of course, certain scenes from the novel reappeared on the stage, in one guise or another. Otherwise "Richard Carvel" would not have been a dramatisation. At the beginning of each act, moreover, the auditor was informed, by a red-coated captain chatting over his affairs with a half-drunken innkeeper, or some similarly ingenious expedient, of all that had happened between the curtains. Accordingly, by the time the end of it all was reached in the betrothal of Richard and Dorothy, pretty nearly everything in Mr. Churchill's book had been rehearsed in one form or another on the stage.

Mr. Drew's Richard Carvel was the work of an excellent actor, who had training enough and technique enough to carry him over many ticklish places. There was an excellent simulation of the breadth and sweep of melodrama, of swaggering youthfulness and of romantic flavour. There was vivacity, nimbleness, and variety. There was, however,

no spontaneity, and no conviction. Richard Carvel did not blot out the remembrance of Mr. Drew's skill as a splendid impersonator of modern light comedy characters.

N. C. GOODWIN

As Richard Carewe in "When We Were Twenty-one."

CHAPTER III.

N. C. GOODWIN, THE COMEDIAN.

AFTER the mock heroics and the feeble tragedy of Clyde Fitch's "Nathan Hale," it was most grateful to have returned to us, with delicacy undiminished, with subtilty unharmed, with humour not a whit broadened, and with pathos as compelling as ever, the comedian, N. C. Goodwin, set forth for our delectation in H. V. Esmond's capital play, "When We Were Twenty-one." Mr. Goodwin has ambitions, of course, and ambitions, rightly directed, are praiseworthy articles; but I, for one, do wish that Mr. Goodwin's ambitions would keep him in the field which is his beyond compare, the field of delicious light comedy. In his line — and it is no

mean, narrow, restricted line at that — he is the best that the American stage can boast of. Why can he not be content with it and quit experimenting? But "Nathan Hale" made money, you say, and besides, Goodwin was certainly excellent in the title part. But the play! The play! An unformed thing that ploughed to a death scene, which was unforgivable outside of history! And the part! An almost passive sufferer, who let himself be driven unresisting and purposelessly this way and that throughout the entire affair!

"When We Were Twenty-one," on the other hand, was not only entertaining; it had novelty as well as charm, original ideas as well as dramatic interest. It put thought into one's head at the same time that it kindled a healthy glow around one's heart. In the second act Mr. Esmond satisfactorily demonstrated a dramatic principle, which must have appalled the conscientious stage-

manager, who was first called upon to consider it as a serious proposition in a play designed for popular approval. Mr. Esmond showed distinctly and convincingly that it was perfectly reasonable to allow that the average gathering in a theatre had some power of intuition and interpretation, — a weak, small power, doubtless, not unlike Holland in the concert of nations, but a real and tangible possession, nevertheless, capable under stimulation of seeing for itself a number of interesting conditions.

For instance, in the second act of this comedy, a situation was reached where a young man, known as the Imp, was betrothed to a young woman named Phyllis. Entering also into the case was a bachelor of forty years, called Richard Carewe, guardian of the Imp and interested in Phyllis and her mother to the extent of permitting them to manage his household while he footed the bills without a murmur, although he was

obliged to sacrifice his annual shooting and his daily horseback riding to do it. Such a kind heart naturally had to be rewarded, and, to be a bit slangy, — the indignity is pardonable inasmuch as the situation was thoroughly conventional, — it was "up to" Mr. Esmond to sidetrack the love-affair of the Imp and Phyllis, and give Carewe a clear track on the main line.

To do this properly and without shocking any one, several things were necessary. First, the young woman had to be considered; for the popular mind, wholly regardless of what it may feel in real life, in fictional cases is always chivalrously sensitive. It had to be settled absolutely that Phyllis's happiness depended on Carewe. It had to be explained that, although she was engaged to the Imp, she loved him only as a brother, or something of that kind, while her heart was actually fixed with unalterable steadfastness on the somewhat elderly bachelor. It

had also to be shown that the bachelor himself, in spite of the fact that he was determined to see the Imp and Phyllis married, loved the girl with that unselfish and self-sacrificing devotion that is so admirable in elderly gentlemen. Finally the Imp had to be gotten rid of, not by leading him away a willing lamb to the slaughter, which would scarcely have been expedient, — for no one likes to see a hearty youngster foregoing the matrimonial hitch for the sake of a gray-haired veteran in the walks of life, — but through some voluntary act of his own.

Mr. Esmond accomplished this direful deed by making the Imp become madly infatuated with a theatrical young woman known as the Firefly ; but, inasmuch as this tragic pillorying of a youth's illusions, his final rescue through the good offices of his friends, and the successful promulgation of the impression that the Imp was not a bad sort of chap after all, — only very young, very fool-

ish, and very headstrong, — made up the plot of the comedy, I shall say nothing about them. Plots are to be enjoyed as they develop in the play, and only in the case of melodrama, which one should never experience unless armed fully with a map of the action, should never be revealed in public.

However, the plot was only incidentally connected with Mr. Esmond's vindication of the great principle of suggestion, which was used to let the house in on the important fact that Carewe loved Phyllis, and that Phyllis loved Carewe. There were any number of ordinary ways of doing this simple thing, — servants, soliloquies, interested friends and whatnot, — but, with merciful kindness, Mr. Esmond would have none of them. Mere words were too bald and too indelicate for the situation. His artistic sense steered him from this pitfall, and he proceeded to make it plain, by the most

delicious comedy touches, — all of them too fine and too keen for statement, but every one of them true and sure, and intellectually delightful, — how matters stood between the couple. It was a dainty bit of plausibility, and it was flattering, too, for every one of us out front, inwardly congratulated himself on his mental shrewdness in rightfully interpreting Mr. Esmond's suggestions.

"When We Were Twenty-one" was a thoroughly enjoyable comedy, — decidedly original in the first act, with its realistic presentation of the birthday party of the four life-long chums, its touches of idealistic comradeship and genuine nobility in the dawning affair of the Imp; wonderfully well written in the second act, still quietly natural, but always intensely interesting and emotionally true, granting to the auditor, as already explained, a modicum of good sense; a bit more theatrical, and consequently less worthy, in the "fast" life scene of the third

act; and again, at the last act, quiet and effective, with an appealing bit of sentiment in the reunion of Carewe and the Imp, although, aside from this, the genuine tone of the clearing-up process smacked somewhat of the usual thing.

Mr. Goodwin himself acted Carewe in his best modern style. His comedy was finished and quiet, and his pathos sincere and touching. He did lack something of polish, though the fault was a minor one, and his love-making in the last act struck me as just a trifle too farcical. The character itself was very near to life, and Mr. Goodwin's art bore well the supreme test of close comparison with the real thing. In fact, throughout there were splendid indications of Mr. Esmond's mastery of character. He presented no types and no freaks, yet his personages were all fixedly set apart one from the other, and they were eminently human. Also in his humour, Mr. Esmond was essentially

dramatic. He did not set pinwheels to buzzing, nor sky-rockets to shrieking, but he accomplished a far worthier thing in plucking his chuckle-breeding fun from the dramatic situations.

During the spring of 1901 Mr. Goodwin made a rapid tour of the country, going as far west as Chicago, as Shylock in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," it being his first appearance in this famous part. The familiar Augustin Daly version of the play was used. In this the episode of the rings is retained, as it is also in Sir Henry Irving's version, and thus at the close of the play one is left with the comedy impression strong and full as Shakespeare intended. For, notwithstanding how heavily with the woes of his people the Jew Shylock may be laden, "The Merchant of Venice," if properly treated, remains always and ever a comedy.

This introduction is pertinent, for it was

this comedy element of the drama that was most potently felt in the Goodwin production. It has been the habit on the stage — mainly because the character of Shylock has been seized upon by actors as a subject for a virtuoso exhibition — to turn Shakespeare's play from the comedy into the tragedy channel. In emphasising Shylock, the delicious lightness of the charming companion plot, in which Portia is the main figure, has been sacrificed, sometimes even to the extent of omitting the ring episode altogether.

Even in the Irving production, wherein the fame of Ellen Terry was accorded due recognition by retaining the full strength of Portia, Shylock's prominence was great enough to destroy the balance, and to kill to a considerable extent one's interest in the action after the trial scene. The ring episode came in the nature of an anti-climax, and one's faith in the mightiness of Shakespeare's dramatic workmanship was shaken.

By permission of Burr McIntosh.

N. C. GOODWIN

As Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice."

One blamed him for the fault, instead of blaming the actors who perverted his work.

I feel justified, therefore, in calling the Goodwin presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" the best balanced performance of the drama that I ever saw. The ratio between the plot dealing with the fortunes of Shylock and Antonio, and that showing the progress of the love of Bassanio and Portia, was maintained with surprising evenness. Whatever restrictions one may have reserved regarding the individual impersonations, he was obliged to concede that the play as a whole was splendidly treated.

Often, in productions of "The Merchant of Venice," one has noticed interest in the action manifestly weaken when Shylock was not on the stage. One has seen the scenes with the caskets, and even the dainty byplay between Portia and Nerissa, drag in wearisome measure. One has perceived that all the energies of the players, and all the

attention of the spectators, were focused on the trial scene, the end of everything coming with Shylock's portentous departure from the tribunal, from which disaster and disgrace and despair had descended upon him. Acted in that fashion, "The Merchant of Venice" seemed a tragedy in which Portia had but a meagre part.

However effective as an exposition of Shylock's character such a performance of "The Merchant of Venice" may be, it certainly is not according to the play that Shakespeare wrote. Shakespeare weighed his two plots equally one against the other, played a delicate game of pitch and toss between the two, gave Shylock the early advantage and Portia the late, brought him into striking prominence in the trial scene in order that he might form the more dramatic background for her shrewdly developed triumph. Finally — and we may disregard in this finding the historical fact that

Shylock was originally a low comedy part — Shakespeare ended his drama in the merriest manner imaginable, with every dark shadow dispelled, with love laughing and happy.

Such, indeed, was the leading impression conveyed by the Goodwin production of the play, a production, therefore, that it was fair to account a capable presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" as a logically developed drama. It was a presentation in which there was a preponderance neither of Shylock nor of Portia; in which the Portia scenes were essentials, not merely tributaries; in which there was no anticlimax after the trial scene, the light comedy of the episode of the rings being quickly caught up, and the play ending in a brilliant blaze of light-hearted jest and joyousness.

To find the cause for the general evenness of this production, one must look chiefly to the Shylock of Mr. Goodwin. In a rough analysis of the drama, one notices, arrayed

on one side of the scale of interest, Shylock and Antonio, and on the other side Portia and Nerissa. Acting as mediaries between the two are Bassanio, Gratiano, and later Lorenzo and Jessica. In most presentations of the play, the chief histrionic interest has been consistently centred in Shylock, with the result that Bassanio, Gratiano, and the rest, instead of running back and forth between Shylock and Portia, have constantly remained fixed at Shylock's side, thus bringing down the scale in his favour. With Mr. Goodwin this did not happen, for his Shylock was never strong enough to seize one's whole attention. Consequently, one had interest to spare for Maxine Elliott's Portia, and for the comedy of which Portia was the centre and the life.

When I say that the Goodwin Shylock was not strong enough to seize the whole attention, I do not mean to be understood as declaring that the actor made a failure of

the character, for he did nothing of the sort. Henry Austin Clapp summarised the case as follows: "The critic has a right to say that Mr. Goodwin's interpretation of the Jew, viewed by the light of the actor's past, of his training, and of his long immersion in the trivialities of the stage, is not only highly creditable to him, but quite remarkable. In comparison, too, with several other assumptions of the leading character of the drama, Mr. Goodwin's Shylock will be found to be worthy. Mr. Goodwin makes of the Jew a picturesque and eye-filling figure, emphasising some traditionally Hebraic peculiarities, as in the high-bridged and curved nose and the many separated curls of the hair. He delivers his text with spirit and intelligence, and at the moments of highest pressure is not extravagant or pathetic.

"His opening scene was particularly good in its clarity and vitality, and, both by Mr. Goodwin and the representatives of Antonio

and Bassanio, was carried out on what is undoubtedly the true Shakespearian theory, namely, that the hostility of Shylock is recognised, and his professions of amiability are understood to be ironical. In his passages with Jessica, Mr. Goodwin's acting was expressive and adequate. Shylock's tremendous tirade in the third act, Mr. Goodwin delivered with much fire and full of sincerity of passion, though he committed the mistake of not carrying his crescendo out to the very close of the passage, so as to make its height at the words, 'And it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.' In the early passages of the trial scene, Mr. Goodwin acted well up to his conception of the Jew, but if he quite failed to impress in his last three speeches, the fault lay deep down in his conception.

"Mr. Goodwin introduced one important novelty. At the close of the scene of revel in front of his dwelling, he repeated Mr.

Irving's innovation by retracing his steps over the bridge. But he did not stop at the door of his house and stand there knocking; he proceeded to rush through the door, which had been left open, and from within his home the spectator heard his repeated calls for Jessica, and his cries, 'Oh, my ducats! Oh, my daughter! Fled with a Christian!' Then he rushed wildly out of the house and partly over the bridge, where he met a compatriot, meanwhile rending the air with cries of 'Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!' After the duke's sentence that 'he presently become a Christian,' Mr. Goodwin, as nearly as could be seen, made something like the sign of the cross, — which might be supposed to mean that he accepted the judgment."

A great Shylock Mr. Goodwin certainly was not, but he was a good Shylock, an intelligent Shylock, an understandable and a human Shylock, and, moreover, a Shylock

not so overweighted as to be out of proportion to the play as a whole. Mr. Goodwin's conception of the part, on general lines, differed in no essential particular from the Macklin tradition, though the malignancy was softened, the hatred made spiteful, the avariciousness especially dwelt upon, and the deep affection for Jessica barely revealed.

What did the Goodwin Shylock lack? It was that indescribable quality of distinction, impressiveness, personal force and appeal, that lift a personation from the generally good to the decidedly great. In a word, bigness of soul never was in evidence. Mr. Goodwin's Shylock interested one, but it did not thrill one. It engendered no positive emotion either of hate or of pity, of horror or of sympathy. The actor seemingly had not done much more than skim the surface of the part. He missed points that other players have made familiar, and he had no new ones of his own to make up the deficiency.

He did not cut down to the quick with an incisiveness that demonstrated understanding and conscious mastery. In the trial scene Mr. Goodwin ventured on more comedy than the modern stage has been accustomed to. This was, of course, thoroughly legitimate, though it did have the disadvantage of weakening the impressiveness of a Shylock, who was supposed to be the embodiment of implacable race hatred.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN B. MASON IN MODERN COMEDY.

In the fall of 1899, John B. Mason, at that time known to the New York theatregoer mainly by his admirable impersonation of the none too thankful part of Horatio Drake in "The Christian," became the leading man of Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theatre Stock Company, an organisation that in point of age and merit has the right to claim first place in the American theatre, since the passing away of Augustin Daly's famous band of players. Its only rival is the Empire Theatre Company, a splendid troupe; but Daniel Frohman's aggregation has succeeded in securing for itself an atmosphere of permanency, a traditional flavour, and even a

JOHN B MASON.

standard of art, apart from commercialism, that his brother Charles's pet organisation has not yet acquired. Moreover, while the Empire Theatre Company has wandered far and wide in the field of plays, producing almost everything of the better class, from melodrama to farce, that promised profit, the Lyceum Company has of late years confined itself entirely to modern comedy, and modern comedy, at that, of strictly English up-to-dateness. Thus Daniel Frohman has given us "Trelawney of the Wells," "Wheels Within Wheels," "The Manœuvres of Jane," and "The Ambassador." During this same period the Empire Theatre productions have included "The Conquerors," melodramatic, and many said worse; "Phroso," certainly worse; the ever delightful "Lord and Lady Algy," and the not uninteresting "Brother Officers."

It is not too much to say that, as the leading man of the Lyceum Theatre Company,

John B. Mason has in two seasons firmly established himself as the finest modern comedy actor in this country. I am fully aware that this statement may cause many a reader to leap to his feet with hot denials on his tongue, with quivering finger pointing to N. C. Goodwin in particular, and to half a dozen others, perhaps, in general. Let us consider the matter calmly. I will modestly limit Mr. Mason's supremacy to modern comedy of the Pinero, Jones, and Carton type, and furthermore to the straight comedy parts in such plays. I claim nothing for him as a light comedian, though as a matter of fact I know that he is an excellent one. I say nothing of his ability as a romantic actor, though I am well aware that he has talent in that line. I make no reference to his capabilities as a character actor, in which field, to tell the truth, I believe that he is not ever likely to distinguish himself. I merely ask for Mr.

Mason recognition in the single line of work in which he has displayed an art so delicate, so subtle, so natural, so human, that it has seemed the realism of nature instead of the realism of art.

I can imagine no stage portraits more truthful or more convincing than Mr. Mason's representations of two wholly different specimens of the gentleman of to-day portrayed in "Wheels Within Wheels" and "The Ambassador." They were English gentlemen, to be sure, the one regrettable feature about them, for the American theatre patron is hungering mightily for precisely such reproductions of American gentlemen; but, fortunately, the true gentleman, of whatever nationality, is in the essentials cosmopolitan, however different he may be in matters of mere etiquette. He is not the whited sepulchre of polished politeness. He is the full measure of a man, instinctive in his chivalry, noble in his self-control, keenly appreciative

of honest sentiment, but neither a milksop nor a railer at fate.

Such a man was Lord Eric Chantrell in R. C. Carton's "Wheels Within Wheels." Thus he was conceived by the dramatist, and thus he was presented by the actor. It was a wonderfully fine study of a man who had lived through every phase of modern worldliness, and who had come from the test wholly unspoiled, a man whose varied experiences had broadened his humanity and deepened his sympathies, whose respect for woman was inherent, not a mere surface decoration, who was slow to judge and tolerant in thought and in deed. No better picture ever was drawn of the modern man, perfectly poised, sure of himself and understanding others, feeling much but saying little, meaning more by a handshake than might be expressed by the most voluble phrases.

It was not altogether easy to select a classification for "Wheels Within Wheels" as a

play, but by calling it a farce, one delicately shirked responsibility. As a matter of fact, "Wheels Within Wheels" might be said to travel a narrow side-path along the road of light comedy, after starting fair and square in the middle of the comedy highway. The vehicle began to turn toward the aforesaid side-path about the time a third of the distance had been covered. After it had left the comedy road altogether, it did not come back to it again until just before the end of the journey was reached.

In naming a class for "Wheels Within Wheels," one had three possible selections. He might call the play a light comedy, which would require a critical, possibly misleading, and on the whole uselessly serious survey of the merits and demerits of the work. He might call it a comedy bordering on farce, a cumbersome and unsatisfactory designation that would only beg the question and demand tedious explanations. Or he might

throw logic, artistic coherency, and probability to the winds, declare the affair a farce, and let it go at that.

The truth was, that the conclusion of Mr. Carton's play was disappointing when compared with the beginning. The first act was superlatively good, — brilliantly constructed, wittily written, and daringly suggestive in a most original and effective way. This act was light comedy of the most charming and fascinating kind, and it left one in an interesting condition of suspense. The things that might have happened after this introduction were multitudinous; the particular thing that did happen was permissible in nothing except the wildest farce. Inasmuch as farce was not naturally expected from a first act so deliciously conceived, I think that we were justly entitled to our feeling of disappointment that "Wheels Within Wheels" was not as a whole equal to its parts.

The dramatic scheme, which John Oliver

Hobbes (Mrs. Craigie) had in mind when she decided to write "The Ambassador," was neither new, startling, nor necessarily ineffective. It was simply to fling into the midst of the heartless, frivolous life of the higher classes — in novels and plays the life of the higher classes always reeks with heartlessness and frivolity, with women who call one another "cats," with interesting men who have punctured reputations, and with good men who are either unbearable bores or hopeless cads — into the midst of this very familiar higher class life, to plunge a throbbing and idealistic love story. She would make, she declared, a hardened man of the world — more than that, a disillusioned diplomatist, who, in addition to meddling with the fate of nations, had found time, in the course of his existence, to break twice a hundred female hearts — become at first sight madly infatuated, even to the marrying point, with a dear, sweet, innocent slip of a girl just out of

school, without a fortune, and without any family to speak of. Then, as a gloomy contrast to this bright, glorious romance, Mrs. Craigie continued, there should be the woman, who loved the unconscious diplomatist with undying devotion, a noble-hearted, generous, and large-souled creature, a mother of boys, a woman who could sacrifice her own happiness with a smile on her lips, though there were tears in her eyes. An excellent scheme, surely, which does not read half badly even when reduced to its lowest terms with cruel commonplaceness!

Unfortunately, however, it was a scheme supercharged with sentimentality, though not incapable, possibly, under the manipulation of the crafty playwright, of making a certain appeal to a romantically sensitive audience. Mrs. Craigie, however, did not show herself a practised playwright. Although there was no especial lack of technical skill in the construction of her comedy, and although there

was often pith, cynical truth, and epigrammatical cleverness in her lines, she failed in the very essential particular of establishing an illusion. Her play was without the kindling touch of humanity. Her characters, with the one exception of Lady Beauvedere, made no impression of reality. Her action throughout suffered for want of a convincing motive. Outwardly, her play, cast so absolutely in the modern school of light comedy, contained nothing beyond possibility or even probability. Indeed, in the reading it struck one as an unusually brilliant bit of stage-craft. On the stage, however, its brilliancy proved most unsatisfyingly superficial and most palpably artificial, while its theme was vague and uncertain.

Yet the fact of a middle-aged man falling in love with a young girl was not so uncommon as to make one dumb with amazement; but the point that Mrs. Craigie overlooked, it seemed to me, was the necessity of proving

that such a love was, in the circumstances represented in her play, well within the range of probability. She forgot that, although the unexpected is always bound to happen on the stage, still it must not happen without definite cause. When Lord St. Orbyn remarked to the girlish Juliet Gainsborough that, after five days' acquaintance, he loved her as he had never loved the two hundred or so women whom he had loved before, even an exceedingly polite audience could not repress an incredulous chuckle. This love at first sight, baldly proclaimed by Mrs. Craigie as an unproven fact, was so wholly unconvincing that every individual in the theatre started at once on a hunt after a concealed reason for St. Orbyn's infatuation.

Now it had happened that, in the first act of her play, Mrs. Craigie, solely for the purpose of showing Miss Gainsborough's social impossibility, innocently exploited, with much laboured finesse, a bit of ancient scandal re-

garding Juliet's mother, who, it seemed, if she had not been opportunely thrown from her horse and killed, would have displayed the bad taste to run away with a man not her husband. Curiously enough, when it became necessary to explain why St. Orbyn fell in love with Juliet, the mind of at least one person reverted to the antique gossip of the first act. Of course, such a joyously melodramatic scheme as making St. Orbyn the man who had planned to elope with Juliet's mother never occurred to Mrs. Craigie, though I do believe that even this crudely theatrical explanation would have been an improvement on no explanation at all.

It was an impossible task for an actor to vitalise more than superficially such a character as St. Orbyn, and Mr. Mason was, to be sure, only the skilled player in his assumption of the part. That was not his fault. Here and there, when the

character gave him a chance, his quality rang true.

"The Man of Forty," which was presented by the Daniel Frohman Company at Daly's Theatre, on November 26, 1900, with Mr. Mason in the part from which the comedy took its name, did not have any great success, though it afforded Mr. Mason an opportunity to display his art in one of those polished, easy-going characters, which he has so thoroughly at his finger-tips. Indeed, he was adversely criticised for being almost too natural and too indifferent to theatrical effect. This rich and good-natured gentleman of forty was in love with a woman in the embarrassing situation of not knowing whether her husband was alive or dead. The husband proved to be alive, for he came upon the scene in time to delay the marriage. Then the middle-aged man's daughter fell in love with the husband, and matters were in this generally disagreeable state, when

the extraneous husband conveniently died of heart-disease at the end of the third act. The best that could be said of the play was that it was commonplace; the worst, that its characters amounted to nothing, that its situations were undeveloped, and its workmanship slovenly, and that its wit was dull and heavy.

It soon was displaced by R. C. Carton's "Lady Huntworth's Experiment," which might briefly be summed up as the adventures of a lady as a cook. She did her masquerading in the kitchen of an English vicarage, and the result was that all the men in the cast fell in love with her, including Captain Dorvaston, a blundering, brusque, gruff, but good-hearted cavalry officer, betrothed to the pretty niece of the vicar. Dorvaston believed himself anxious only to offer honest friendship and help to the cook, whom he recognised as "a lady down on her luck." Of course, the

captain did not really love the vicar's niece to whom he was engaged, any more than she really loved him, and, consequently, when the niece eloped with the handsome curate, the captain, without wasting any time in grief, rushed after information regarding the earliest train that would take him to the side of his vanished cook. Mr. Mason as Captain Dorvaston gave an artistic character study, making the genial, blundering soldier thoroughly lovable, even if a trifle abrupt.

FRITZ WILLIAMS.

CHAPTER V.

FRITZ WILLIAMS.

As leading juvenile of Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theatre Company, Fritz Williams was generally regarded — and rightly, too — as the first of the younger generation of comedians on the American stage. His best work seemed to be done in light comedy parts that bordered on the eccentric. His acting was remarkable for its brilliancy, vivacity, and unflagging spirit. It was clean-cut, but it was also cold. There was very little of the broad sympathy of full-blooded humour in evidence, but a great deal of the biting quality that is inherent in wit. What Mr. Williams's gifts in the way of portraying sentiment may be, no one can be sure, for

recently he has done nothing except play youthful husbands in French farces, characters that are solely vehicles of mechanically devised comedy. That he did at one time possess the true spirit of comedy was shown by his impersonation of the devoted darky in Dion Boucicault's play, "Fin-ma-coul." Into that part he introduced the vein of pathos without which no comedian can hope ever to be great.

Mr. Williams, who was named Frederick after his father, was born in Boston on August 23, 1865, the night that his father made his first appearance at the Boston Museum as Modus in "The Hunchback." His parents were members of the Museum Company for fifteen years, and it was at that house that the infant Fritz made his first appearance on any stage, being carried on in the arms of William Warren, the comedian, as the fractious baby in a farce called "Seeing Warren." The boy's parents intended

to make a musician of him, and school duties, therefore, were augmented by the study of the violin. Still, the lad had a natural taste for the theatre, as is shown by the following anecdote, related by Mr. Williams:

"I remember one instance of my early boyhood with a vividness born of its danger, real and, to my young mind, impending. My father allowed me sometimes to accompany him to the theatre, and there, one night, I saw Frank Cranfrau in his well-known play of 'Kit, the Arkansaw Traveller.' I thought it the most wonderful thing I had ever seen, and was fired with a desire to figure as the burly hero myself. I succeeded in concocting a version of the play and placed it in rehearsal with the neighbour's children, in the neighbour's stable. Even at that early age I had a strong leaning toward stage effects, and decided that we must have the great steamboat explosion. My lack of knowledge, regarding how these effects were made in the

theatre, did not prevent me from proceeding in my own way. A bundle of large cannon crackers was produced, and three were placed in each of four barrels filled with sawdust. We had a crowded house, and the audience seemed as delighted with the play as we were ourselves. 'Ah,' I said, 'wait until the explosion. Then they will go wild.' They did. When the time arrived, I set fire to the fuse. In an instant came a terrific explosion, and the air was filled with smoke and burning sawdust. Consternation prevailed. Shouts of 'Fire!' soon arose, and with reason. The burning sawdust ignited the roof beyond our reach. I instantly decided that I would feel better somewhere else, and fled for home. By the time the fire-engines got to the blazing stable, I was in bed and feigning a sleep that did not really come until long after the engines had ceased their pumping."

In 1879, young Williams made a great impression as a singer and actor of quaint

comedy in the part of Sir Joseph Porter in "Pinafore," acted by a juvenile company, of which Effie Shannon was also a member, at the Boston Museum. At this period he played the violin with some skill, and was able to read his part in the operetta from the score at sight during the first rehearsal. Later in this same year the Williams family moved to New York, where Fritz was heard in public again, this time as a concert vocalist. On St. Patrick's Day, 1880, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore gave a big concert in Madison Square Garden. One of the numbers was "Gilmore's American Anthem," and this was sung by the boy from Boston at both the afternoon and evening performances, and rousingly encored he was, too.

Mr. Williams had at that time a singing voice of much power and beauty. Unfortunately, a reckless devotion to baseball and yelling, when on the field with the nine of Fordham College, destroyed it. In New

York, Williams became a member of the orchestra of the Germania Theatre, afterward Tony Pastor's, and under the leadership of Herr Neuendorf, played one of the first violins for two seasons. At college, however, the idea of acting seized him, and while still a student, he made his first bow to an audience as a professional actor at Wallack's Theatre, New York, in the part of Anatole in "A Scrap of Paper," Mr. Wallack being the Prosper of the cast. Mr. Williams, by the way, graduated at St. John's College, Fordham, when he was twenty years old, taking second honours in Greek.

Here it might be well to explain how Mr. Williams came by the name of Fritz. As his father was also Frederick, abbreviated to Fred, it occasioned some confusion in the family. To get around this inconvenience, Fred junior was known as Fritz. Mr. Wallack, who met the boy frequently at the Grand Opera House, then under the manage-

ment of the boy's uncle, Thomas Donnelly, placed the name Fritz on the bill of the play in which young Williams made his début, and Fritz he remained ever after.

After "A Scrap of Paper," Mr. Williams made a decided hit as Jimmy in "Nita's First." For two seasons he continued at Wallack's, receiving personal training and instruction at the hands of the accomplished actor at the head of the company. Then he became a member of the company controlled by Dion Boucicault, playing the juvenile and light comedy parts, among them Geoffrey Tudor in "The Jilt." With this organisation he remained for three seasons, deriving all the benefit association with so gifted a man as Boucicault could bestow.

After this, a season's experience as the leading man of a travelling company, that of Arthur Rehan, who had the monopoly on the road of Augustin Daly's comedies, was enough to persuade the young comedian that

a permanent residence in New York as a member of a stock company was preferable to a peripatetic career, even as leading man, and he secured an engagement with the Lyceum Theatre Company, which continued until the end of the season of 1897–98, Mr. Williams's best-known parts being the leading juvenile characters in "The Wife," "The Charity Ball," "The Idler," "Sweet Lavender," "The Marquise," "The Home Secretary," and "The Case of Rebellious Susan."

Mr. Williams's identification with farce began in October, 1898, when he appeared as Alfred Godfray in Alexander Bisson's "On and Off." This was followed by appearances in such indifferent specimens of play-writing as "Coralie & Co.," "Make Way for the Ladies," "Self and Lady," and "The Lash of the Whip." During the season of 1900–01, also, Mr. Williams was for a brief period spectacularly connected with Weber and Fields's Music Hall in New

York, taking at very short notice the place of Charles J. Ross, who suddenly quitted the Weber and Fields Company.

"On and Off" was a farce that was amusing all the way through. Such farces are rarities and worthy of being remembered, — no stumbling opening taking up half an act before the real action begins, no limping nor halting in the second act, no ending that is thoroughly nonsensical and palpably a makeshift. With "On and Off" the fun began at once, and never stopped for an instant until the curtain fell on the last act. To attempt to ensnare the plot of a really good farce in the cumbersome net of "Thus it happened," is to do a double injustice; first, to the farce itself, for the complications that seemed ridiculous when presented on the stage utterly lose their savour when described in cold words; second, to the person who may some time or other have the pleasure of seeing the farce acted. One has

no moral right to deprive him of the joyous experience of surprise. And, after all is said, surprise is the chief stock in trade of the maker of farces.

"On and Off" was a translation, — and an excellent one, to judge by the easy colloquialism of the dialogue, — and not an adaptation from the French, and the fact that it was a translation was a distinct merit in itself. Adaptation — that is, the resetting of fixed incidents in a changed environment — is inartistic, if not actually dishonest business. Moreover, it is, except in the most exceptional cases, merely a matter of paraphrasing. But to translate accurately and adequately one must read deeply into the spirit of the original, and his understanding must be reënforced with sympathy. Having ascertained exactly what the foreign author has said, the translator must then shift entirely his point of view in the search for the one word and the exact phrase that will

convey in another tongue the precise meaning of the original. In the version of "On and Off," both atmosphere was preserved and intelligibility was attained. The dialogue was snappy and bright, without circumlocutions; and the epigrams and witticisms were perfectly Englished. They may have been the translator's originations, or they may have been adaptations of the French; whichever way it was, they reflected faithfully the spirit of Mr. Bisson's work.

Yet, when brought face to face with such a high grade of light comedy acting as that shown by Mr. Williams and Mr. E. M. Holland in this farce, one was tempted to declare that, after all, the play was not the thing. Certain it is that no farce was ever written which could not be ruined by bad acting; and equally true it is that many a poor farce has been pulled through by the strenuous endeavours of the mummers. In fact, the ordinary farcical ratio may be stated as one-

third play to two-thirds actors. Mr. Holland's style was, perhaps, a bit more polished than Mr. Williams's. Especially fine was his perfect repose in the midst of a whirlwind of action, some of his best effects being obtained simply by doing nothing. At other times a glance of the eye, a single gesture, or the slightest change in facial expression, were used to convey a vastness of meaning. His powers of suggestion were apparently unlimited.

Mr. Williams's effects were broader, though none the less sure, and, inasmuch as Alfred Godfray was at all times the master of the situation, Mr. Williams's sweeping sense of humour was allowed full play. Moreover, he passed through several love-scenes with fine taste, and dodged tactfully several situations that might have been made exceedingly colourful.

WILLIAM GILLETTE

As Sherlock Holmes in "Sherlock Holmes."

CHAPTER VI.

WILLIAM GILLETTE AND "SHERLOCK HOLMES."

MODESTY is probably a good thing in the abstract, even as it is a rare thing in the concrete, so rare, indeed, that when one encounters it unawares, or in unexpected places, he is apt innocently to be led astray. After all, the world's opinion of a man is not unlikely to coincide in essentials with the man's opinion of himself. William Gillette's opinion of himself has always seemed to be: "I'm a pretty fair sort of stage carpenter, and I'm not altogether bad as an actor, after I've written myself a part that suits me. But pshaw!"

That "But pshaw!" is Gillette all over, and the public in general has unconsciously

taken its cue from him. It pays its money gladly and in copious quantities to see Mr. Gillette's plays, and to see Mr. Gillette act, but when it comes to considering Mr. Gillette seriously, either as dramatist or actor, the public smiles knowingly, and ejaculates, "But pshaw!" Yet here is a man who brings forth plays that are not only successes for a season, but which live to a green old age in comparison with the ordinary ephemeral theatrical works of to-day and yesterday.

"Held by the Enemy" is exactly as good now as it ever was, although its most effective situations have been stolen time and again, and although the drama itself has been repeatedly subjected to the strain of stock company productions. "The Private Secretary," which has passed through experiences that would reduce the usual thing in farces to a condition that only cremation could remedy, is resurrected every now and then, and just as surely as it is brought to

life, it makes a hit. "Secret Service" is a strong, compelling play, which has inherent vigour enough, and keen effectiveness enough to furnish a round dozen machine melodramas. I know because I have seen it, not only with the perfect presentation of Mr. Gillette's own company, but through the acting of an organisation playing the "popular priced" theatres.

Lastly, there is "Sherlock Holmes," a play revolving around the celebrated detective invented by Dr. A. Conan Doyle. By making this drama frank and shameless buncombe, Mr. Gillette disarmed to a considerable extent any serious criticism. It took no vast intellect, no supreme intelligence to point out the plain fact that there was nothing probable or even possible about the play; that it was sensationalism run riot, sensationalism idealised; and consequently, after Mr. Gillette had cheerfully, and of his own accord, jumped from the pedestal of artistic seriousness, there was neither wisdom nor profit in mak-

ing believe that he was still up there, and valiantly shooting peas at his shadow in order to prove it. Still, should one have persisted in indulging in this innocent pastime, he would first have been compelled to grant the passing worthiness of a play that made Conan Doyle's fascinating Sherlock Holmes so much a reality. By his complete and unique realisation of this fantastic, imaginative, and at the same time potently human conception, by his accurate transferral of the impossible, but none the less convincing detective, from the intangible atmosphere of bookland to the definite materialism of stageville, Mr. Gillette honestly earned the reward of serious commendation. Here was more than mere trickery; here was positive achievement.

This character is Doctor Doyle's creation, — a wholly fictitious, but at the same time a wonderfully lifelike conception, a conception that appeals to the imagination, arouses in-

tense interest, and, moreover, inspires in one an almost irresistible desire to go and do likewise. Mr. Gillette succeeded — and a rare achievement it was, too — in getting Holmes on the stage without robbing him of a single one of his subtle charms. Indeed, if anything, Mr. Gillette, in vividness of personality, made Holmes even more irresistible as a presence than he was in the book; at the same time, he retained in full Holmes's imaginative appeal, and added, without spoiling the original, a faint touch of heart interest and sentiment, that tinged the part with the shadow of pathos.

Sherlock Holmes, more than any other single factor, raised Mr. Gillette's play from a low level of commonplace sensationalism. But there were other factors which helped. One of these was Mr. Gillette's use of natural darkness as a curtain. One never saw the theatre curtain rise or fall. The house was plunged into darkness first, and the scene

on the stage then gradually came into view with a stereopticon-like effect, and at the end of the act in similar manner faded from view. Trickery! To be sure, but artistic trickery, and trickery, too, that had positive value as a stimulus to the imagination. It helped very much to establish a certain vague sense of unreality, a fairy-story condition of mind that was excellent for the proper reception of Mr. Gillette's efforts to please.

Finally, there was the superb way in which the story was told. If, as the old saw has it, fully half of the effectiveness of a story is in the telling of it, then Mr. Gillette got three-quarters. The yarn itself was both childish and ludicrous, but the method and the manner in which it was set forth betokened the keen masterfulness of a man who knew how to use his tools, and who had a big chestful of them at his disposal.

Consequently, the persons who were too cultured or too blasé, or too anything else,

to get thrills, cold chills up and down the spine, and all the other bodily indications of intense dramatic interest from "Sherlock Holmes," or too smart to be caught in any theatrical traps, with which the play was so plentifully supplied, were very few indeed. One might harden his heart and might think strenuous thoughts, — neither did him the least good. He could not escape the crafty Mr. Gillette, whose wiles were many and whose cunning was past all understanding. "Sherlock Holmes" was melodrama. Moreover, it was wild, sensational, wholly impossible, absolutely absurd melodrama. It was as logically indefensible as the penny dreadful of the Messenger Boy's Own Library. All this condemnation was plainly posted so that all might read it. There was no pretense about "Sherlock Holmes." It stood for exactly what it was, — a most ridiculously improbable, and, at the same time, a most tremendously absorbing play.

There was reason in the paradox. Taken in cold blood and out of its surroundings, the story which formed the groundwork for Mr. Gillette's play was supremely ridiculous, — this Professor Moriarty, "the Napoleon of crime," with his myrmidons haunting the London streets, with his mysterious underground headquarters with its strange, clanging locks, and its convenient telephones, and with his fearsome gas-chamber, — awe-inspiring enough to make the hair of the small boy stand on end, but scarcely food for the matter-of-fact adult. Still the adult did gulp it down with unspeakable eagerness, with smackings of the lips and other manifest signs of satisfaction. And why? Wholly on account of the way in which it was prepared and served. The skilful French cook, so it is said, can make the most delicious soup from a boot-leg, if only he be given full swing in the matter of seasoning. Plainly Mr. Gillette is a French cook among dramatists.

The inherent weakness of "Sherlock Holmes" was the failure of Moriarty as a foil to Holmes. The chief mistake seemed to have been made in removing Moriarty from the half-shadow of his spider-like cell, and bringing him forth where every one could get a good look at him. The resulting scene between Holmes and Moriarty was intensely thrilling and all that, but it had, nevertheless, a distinctly deteriorating effect on one's interest in the play. When Holmes made it plain that Moriarty was a cheap bluff, he pulled the prop from under Mr. Gillette's play. After that, attention was centred not so much in what happened as in how it was done. Moriarty pulling wires in his cellar was a creature of mystery and of dramatic potentiality. Moriarty out in broad daylight was tawdry cheapness, a weakling, a blatant ass without force or character, and with no personality to inspire confidence in him even as a "Napoleon of crime."

The first act of "Sherlock Holmes," with its incisive action, its constant suspense, its haunting mystery, its vivid characterisations, and its menacing Moriarty, was the height of melodramatic appeal. Interesting as the remainder of the play was, it never again exerted similar compelling power. In the last act, alone, a carefully nursed mystery brought something the same effect, but with no such force. How important Moriarty was to the play was demonstrated in this last act, when, after his arrest, the action came to a complete standstill, and was only started up again by a personal appeal from Mr. Gillette. With a strong Moriarty to make the conflict with the omnipotent detective a sportsmanlike struggle, "Sherlock Holmes" would have been melodramatic perfection.

Merely to illustrate Mr. Gillette's method, I am going to describe the last act somewhat in detail. The scene was Doctor Watson's office, and as far as the spectators having

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any idea what was going to happen, the previous three acts might never have transpired. When the doctor's room brightened from darkness into light, the physician was seen giving a worthy-looking woman a bottle of medicine. Going out, she took the wrong door, and quickly turned this seeming blunder into an opportunity to make a hasty examination of the surroundings. Thus we learned that something was up, though we had not the least idea what it might be.

Next entered an old friend, Sidney Prince, the "crook." He was apparently suffering from an exceedingly bad cold in the throat, but we soon were permitted to see that this cold was a "fake." Prince, at length, got the doctor out of the room, snapped up the shades of the windows, was caught while prying about and fired bodily from the house. By this time our curiosity was mounting up, but we had not yet got the lay of the land. The old woman first on the scene we did not

know. Prince himself we recognised as only half a villain. Consequently, we were wholly in doubt as regards the precise motive behind all these mysterious happenings.

Then came the beautiful Madge Larrabee, the arch-villainess, masquerading as some one else and desiring most anxiously that Doctor Watson should tell her where she could find Sherlock Holmes. Now we began to see daylight, and so did the rather stupid doctor. Hark! Big row in the street! Accident to a cab! Indignant old gentleman and expostulating cabman are ushered into the doctor's office. Disguises quickly removed! Sherlock Holmes, the detective! Trickery? Certainly, the last ditch of trickery; but, while the action is under full swing, the acme of theatrical effectiveness.

A noticeable technical point in "Sherlock Holmes" was the manner in which the character of John Forman, Holmes's faithful stool-pigeon, was developed. Throughout

the first act of the play Mr. Gillette, evidently in order to avoid weakening Holmes's business, violated with the utmost nonchalance the law of play-writing, which rules that the audience must be given an inside view of affairs on the stage at the earliest possible moment. Forman was a prominent personage in the first act, a very prominent personage, but try as hard as one might, he could not positively define Forman's position in the Larrabee household. Nor did he learn it until after the first act was dead and buried and the second act was well under way. There were half a dozen things, which one might surmise about Forman, but he could not positively place him as Holmes's coworker until his intimate relations with the detective were divulged in the second act. Mr. Gillette ignored the dramatic canon without suffering any manifest inconvenience, largely, I think, because of the keen attention that was centred in Sherlock Holmes,

which made minor considerations of little importance, and, too, because of the vast faith one had in Holmes's powers of observation and deduction, which made not at all surprising the amount of information he possessed regarding the Larrabee household.

The acting of "Sherlock Holmes" was in many particulars as remarkable as the play. It, too, was idealised to the point of unreality, and it was electrical with strained intentness. Most of the characters seemed to be carrying sticks of dynamite around in their pockets and momentarily expecting an explosion. Supremely in evidence in Holmes himself was Mr. Gillette's unaccountable knack of focussing all the interest on himself without seeming to do anything of the kind. Holmes was a series of eloquent silences, — a chap of the most uncanny fascination, who never did anything until he had to, and who, when he did do anything, always did something worth while. The result was that one

became so afraid that he might miss something which Holmes did, that he watched Holmes continually, not daring to look away lest the detective might seize that opportunity for springing one of his only occasional actions. While it was true that Mr. Gillette acted Sherlock Holmes in the same general style that he did the Yankee officer in "Secret Service," it was true, too, that Sherlock Holmes was a thoroughly distinct and thoroughly individualised characterisation.

One cannot observe Mr. Gillette, the player, as the central figure in one of Mr. Gillette's plays without reflecting how wholly good it is for an actor to be his own dramatist. This idealistic condition was forced home in the first act of "Sherlock Holmes," when one watched sympathetically five faithful players working with might and main for fully ten minutes, providing for Mr. Gillette, in the person of Sherlock Holmes, an impressive and effective entrance. And it

was an effective entrance, — let there be no doubt regarding that, — effective from the moment that Mrs. Larrabee peeped behind the picture and announced that a tall, thin man was on the doorstep, to the moment when Holmes pulled off his overcoat and seemingly settled himself on the uneasy Larrabees for the night. Not that the tenseness of the situation was ever so slightly relaxed after this amusing manœuvre, — quite the contrary, for still to come were sizzling points of interest; but the formal "entrance" was completed when Holmes removed his coat.

Gillette, the actor, is a strange being, whom every one that has written on the drama during the past fifteen years has tried to explain, and whom no one has as yet succeeded to any appreciable extent in getting on paper. Mr. Gillette has in his portrait gallery four characters, — Rev. Robert Spaulding of "The Private Secretary," Billings,

the cheerful liar of "Too Much Johnson," Captain Thorne of "Secret Service," and Sherlock Holmes. Naturally, Mr. Gillette himself being tall and lean and lank, all four of these personages are tall and lean and lank. Except for this superficial resemblance to the others, the Rev. Mr. Spaulding might be cut out. He was unique and not to be compared with any one or anything else. In two apparent particulars Billings, Captain Thorne, and Holmes were very similar. They all were mighty smokers, and they all were admirably cool under every sort of trying circumstance. Beyond these three points, however, physique, tobacco, and coolness, there was not an item of resemblance between them. Nor was their individuality a mere surface cloak that could be removed and examined at leisure. This individuality was bred in the bone; it was part of the fibre of character. Therefore it was completely beyond analysis. One can say what

a person is, but he cannot say why he is. One knows that Billings was neither Thorne nor Holmes. One knows that under no conditions would he mistake Thorne for Holmes. That they were different he had absolute knowledge; how they were different — beyond the minor facts that they did different things and lived in different environments — he found impossible to declare.

It follows, therefore, however much we may limit Mr. Gillette's range of emotional expression, we must give him credit for a peculiar and mysterious versatility in character delineation, — a strange and inexplicable histrionic quality that enables him constantly to maintain an insistent, strikingly unique, and seemingly fixed personality, and at the same time to project an impersonation that is unmistakably individualised. His range of expression may be limited. He may not be able to voice moral precepts with sincerity, and he may be unimpressive as a

lover; but within his range he is a marvel of vividness, of directness, of economy of effort, of dramatic force, of perfect self-poise, of constant command of resources, of thorough conviction.

As before intimated, a large proportion of the success of Mr. Gillette, the actor, has been due to the skill, the ingenuity, and the theatrical cleverness of Mr. Gillette, the play-maker. It is perfectly plain that Dramatist Gillette has a thorough understanding of Actor Gillette, and this fortunate, and not altogether common circumstance enables the two to work together with inspiring harmony.

CHAPTER VII.

EDWIN ARDEN.

One of the notable characterisations of the Maude Adams production of Edmond Rostand's "L'Aiglon" was the Metternich of Edwin Arden. This character was Rostand's "*deus ex machina*." It represented fate, the constant, foreboding shadow that continuously encompassed, with sombre menace, the pitifully weak figure of the struggling Napoleon. Metternich's attitude toward the duke was very like the attitude of the conventional villain of melodrama toward the hero. Yet Metternich was not a villain. Although always forced outside one's sympathy, by his opposition to the Duke of Reichstadt, Metternich was, nevertheless,

EDWIN ARDEN

As Metternich in "L'Aiglon."

representative of a patriotism that was thoroughly ideal. The fact that one disliked the things that Metternich's patriotism compelled him to do, should not blind one to the obvious sincerity and unselfishness of the diplomat's motives. That Metternich persistently thwarted the Eaglet's ambition to reign as Emperor of France was true, but Metternich's reasons for acting as he did were never personal. Indeed, it was open to suspicion that as a man he was not without a certain fondness for Napoleon's son; but as a diplomat and as Prime Minister of Austria he believed it his highest duty rigorously to check even the feeblest attempts of the Napoleon spirit to make itself felt.

Metternich's desire was to rule the duke with kindness, and that the inevitable conflict with the duke's ambition might be postponed as long as possible, Metternich did everything in his power to keep his charge

in ignorance of the enflaming glories of his father's history. When this condition of ignorance was outgrown, Metternich tried argument and subtle cunning. These accomplishing nothing, brutal force alone remained, and in the dreadful scene before the mirror, Metternich played his last trump-card. He relentlessly revealed to the quivering morsel of humanity, held captive by the awful power of unmanly fear, every weakness of heritage and every fault of character. Finally, after the duke's death, which followed crushed hope and defeated ambitions, it was Metternich who summed up the tragic and pathetic futility of the Eaglet's life-struggle in the words, "Clothe him in his Austrian uniform."

Personally, I did not realise in full the excellence of Mr. Arden's presentation of Metternich until I had a chance to compare it with the decidedly less effective and worthy Metternich of Desjardin, who acted

the part in the Bernhardt production of "L'Aiglon." It is possible that Mr. Arden erred a trifle on the side of theatricalism, — he was, perhaps, a bit too smooth, too polished, too self-possessed; but, on the other hand, he did give to Metternich undeniable distinction, and that was vital to the part. Mr. Arden's Metternich, too, was thoroughly impersonal. His Metternich was relentless in stifling the Duke of Reichstadt's aspirations simply and solely because, as Prime Minister of Austria, he knew that Austria's interests demanded that these ambitions should be stifled. Mr. Arden's Metternich was a whole-souled patriot.

Desjardin lowered Metternich's idealism very perceptibly. He made Metternich very much of a small-minded man, and very little of a far-seeing, unselfish prime minister. Metternich, according to Desjardin's view of the case, had a strong personal feeling against the duke. He owed him a grudge,

hated the lad for himself, and feared him, moreover, because he was the son of his father. The mirror scene in the French presentation showed a Metternich gloating in a brutal revenge; in the American presentation this scene was on a far higher plane, — it showed a Metternich performing a hateful duty for his country's sake.

Edwin Hunter Pendleton Arden was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 13, 1864. He received a common school education, after which, when he was about sixteen or seventeen years old, he decided to take Horace Greeley's advice and go West. The experience that he piled up in that section of the country in a short time was something marvellous. He began as a mine helper, next tried cow-punching, and was successively a clerk, a politician, a newspaper reporter, and a theatrical manager. Thus it will be seen that Mr. Arden climbed on the stage through the box-office, a most un-

usual proceeding. Many actors have become managers, but few managers have become actors.

Mr. Arden's first professional appearance on the stage was made in Chicago, in 1882, with the Thomas W. Keene company, and the next three years were passed in various companies, a part of the time in the stock organisation of the Boston Museum, where he acted small parts, and in the Madison Square Company of New York. Then Mr. Arden learned that he could write plays as well as act them, and the following nine years of his life were spent as a star in sensational melodramas, of which he was either the sole or part author. These were "The Eagle's Nest," "Barred Out," and "Raglan's Way." Following this experience, as a member of William H. Crane's company, Mr. Arden created the part of the wicked Kentuckian, Mason Hix, when Franklin Fyles's melodramatic comedy, "The Gov-

ernor of Kentucky," was produced in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 18, 1896.

Mr. Arden's skill in light comedy was admirably shown by his playing of Oliver West, the much-harassed husband in "Because She Loved Him So," the capital farce which William Gillette adapted from the French, and which was first acted in New Haven, Connecticut, on October 28, 1898. This play was a model of adaptation, by the way, and, from the French original, which may not have been, but which probably was, exceedingly spicy, Mr. Gillette made a full-blooded English farce, that did not demand a troupe of ground and lofty tumblers for its proper exploitation, that was without vulgarity, and which was, even with these manifold virtues, excellent sport. Mr. Arden displayed a light comedy style that was polished and easy, yet full of life and vim. Moreover, he had the estimable quality of absolute seriousness, which gave added comic power

to all his scenes that bordered on the farcical-tragic.

In August, 1899, Mr. Arden returned to starring, producing in Rochester, New York, a melodrama called "Zorah," of which he was the author. This play was placed in Moscow, and most of the characters were Russian Jews. The main interest centred around the love of Israel Francos, a young rabbi, played by Mr. Arden, for Zorah, daughter of Mordecai Strakosch, although there was a secondary romance in which two Americans were the main factors. The drama was extremely sensational, besides being involved and complicated in plot. It never survived a Chicago engagement, though, had not Mr. Arden's eyesight failed him, compelling his retirement from work for the rest of the season, there might have been a different story to tell.

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD MANSFIELD'S HENRY V.

RICHARD MANSFIELD'S first performance of William Shakespeare's rarely acted drama, "King Henry V.," was given at the Garden Theatre, New York City, on October 3, 1900. The production was an immediate success, and was finely patronised during a long run. After leaving New York, Mr. Mansfield appeared as King Henry in the principal theatrical centres of the East and Middle West, receiving everywhere more general commendation than had been given any of his previous ventures. His revival of "Henry V." was, indeed, an astonishing mechanical achievement. Moreover, the performance itself, taken as a whole, was one of the most

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

satisfactory of a Shakespearian play that I ever saw. There were individual faults in abundance, but nearly all of these could be traced to an inability to read Shakespearian verse. Thus they could be fastened on comparatively few of the players. The actors with prose speeches or with no speeches at all were drilled with such care and with such intelligence that they could scarcely have gone wrong if they had tried.

In sequence of scenes Mr. Mansfield, in his acting version of "King Henry V.," followed the original play closely enough. Naturally he cut out speeches and even whole episodes with a liberal hand, as was necessary, not only to bring the action within the time-limit of the modern theatre, but also to prevent boredom on the part of the spectator. Chorus introduced the action, and Mansfield's Act I. included Act I. of the original, and the first three scenes of the original Act II., Chorus being brought in once more be-

fore the Southampton scene. The Mansfield act ended with the departure of Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol to join Henry's army, the Boy's speech, beginning, "As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers," being used to bring down the curtain. The last part of Act II. and the first part of Act III. of the original, formed the Mansfield Act II., which opened in the palace of Charles VI. of France. Then followed Chorus and the scenes before Harfleur, King Charles's interview with the English ambassador, the English camp at Picardy, the act ending with Henry's dismissal of the French herald and these lines spoken by the English king:

> "Beyond this river we'll encamp ourselves,
> And on to-morrow, bid them march away."

Chorus introduced the Mansfield Act III., speaking the prologue to Act IV. of the original, "Now entertain conjecture for a time." The Dauphin's tent at Agincourt was first

shown, and then came the English camp before dawn, and the various scenes of the battle. This act included practically the whole of the original Act IV. Mansfield's fourth act was devoted entirely to a spectacular representation of Henry's return to London, the only words spoken being part of the prologue to the original Act V., recited by Chorus. The scene showing the French Princess Katherine trying to learn English from the equally French Alice was transferred from Act III. of the original, and used as the first scene of Mansfield's Act V. Henry's wooing followed apace. Fluellen's cudgelling of Pistol was, of course, retained, and Mr. Mansfield ended the play with an interpolated spectacular processional, the espousal of Henry and Katherine.

In this admirable arrangement of the play there was but one serious discrepancy to be noticed. That came from following Katherine's French lesson so closely by Henry's

wooing. One moment the French princess knew no English at all. The next moment she was stumbling around in the language with respectable ease. However, when one balanced this single contradiction against the difficulties that Mr. Mansfield overcame in presenting a comprehensive and smoothly acting version of this massive war spectacle, it really amounted to nothing.

On so high a plane of general excellence was the production conceived and presented, that it would be unfair to pick any particular bit to exploit. All was remarkably fine, even the humble "front" scenes, which ordinarily are sacrificed to the full stage sets. In Act I., one was impressed with the unique throne picture, which had, however, from the auditor's standpoint, disadvantages as well as advantages. Spreading across the full back of the stage as it did, it made a splendid suggestion of bigness; but it also lost to the listeners the whole of the archbishop's

speech, for that worthy, in addressing the king, was obliged to talk with his back to the house. In this same act, very effective was the quay at Southampton. In Act II., the scene before Harfleur was the most striking. Act III. was rich in spectacle. Finely contrasted in two scenes, one following the other, were the riotous gaiety and boasting in the French camp before the battle of Agincourt and the sober seriousness in the English camp. Most dramatic pictorially was the tableau representing the battle itself. Act IV., the home-coming of the king, was all for the eye, and this, too, at the end, furnished another splendid and inspiring tableau. No less gorgeous was the espousal scene, which ended the play.

In his introduction to the "Richard Mansfield Acting Version of King Henry V.," Mr. Mansfield discoursed to considerable length on his conception of Henry's character. In brief, Mr. Mansfield's ideas were that Henry

must at first reflect the Prince Hal of "King Henry IV.," Part II.; must be youthful, debonair, gracious, and yet with new-born kingliness, tact, and statecraft. In the scene at Southampton, Mr. Mansfield found the first notes of melancholy and pathos, and throughout the succeeding passages Mr. Mansfield saw Henry as the leader of men, as the eloquent and forceful pleader, as the royal philosopher, as the trusting Christian, and as the manly lover. In this same interesting introduction, Mr. Mansfield also told why he produced "Henry V." "The inducements that led me to produce 'Henry V.' were a consideration of its healthy and virile tone . . . the nobility of its language . . . the lesson it teaches of godliness, honour, loyalty, courage, cheerfulness, and perseverance; its beneficial influence upon the young and old; the opportunity it affords for a pictorial representation of the costumes and armour, manners and customs of that

interesting period, and perhaps a desire to prove that the American stage, even under difficulties, is quite able to hold its own artistically with the European."

"Henry V." cannot properly be called a play, nor is it worthy of being named an epic, as some enthusiasts have designated it. The low comedy scenes with their unheroic prose — even the verse itself, which is more often lyric than narrative — rob the work of all semblance to the epic. Its chief dramatic value comes from the thoroughness with which the character of the famously popular Henry V. is set forth. As some one has said, in him Shakespeare represents his ideal of kingliness. Indeed, the dramatist apparently has no direct interest in any other personage in the work except the Welshman, Fluellen, whose deep-seated sincerity, hidden behind the mask of the loquacious martinet, attracted Shakespeare mightily. However, with Henry and Fluellen out of the case, it

is readily perceived that the poet's main purpose was to fire the patriotism of the Englishman. "Henry V." is a great summing up of a national spirit, and a championing of national ideas, even in their narrowness. In this play Shakespeare's view-point is distinctly insular.

As a satirical friend of mine remarked, "Henry V." is a play not likely to add greatly to Mr. Shakespeare's reputation. What a howling popular success it must have been, though, when it was acted in London for the first time on some favoured evening between April 15 and September 28, 1599! Without doubt it moved the ancient populace as mightily as a modern sensational melodrama, with real soldiers from the Philippines, moves the gallery god of to-day; more so, probably, for the Shakespearian gallery god — his home was in the pit in those days — could not have been sophisticated even to the slight degree of his modern

prototype. How the robustious actor, with leather lungs, roared out his poetic defiance of the scurvy French, amid the inspiring plaudits of the hard-handed men of London! Imagine the "quality," smiling superciliously, but deigning, nevertheless, to acknowledge the Shakespearian jingoism with genteel clappings of the hands! Did they shout "Bravo!" in those days, I wonder, regarding such vociferation as a mark of superior intelligence? Consider, too, the riotous laughter aroused by the Shakespearian low comedy, with its broad, insistent humour, the shouts of merriment at the strutting Pistol, at the pea-in-a-bladder Nym, and at the worthy Bardolph, serious-minded as the up-to-date "sport," when he discusses wisely the prowess of his favourite professional bruiser. Omit not from the reckoning the Shakespearian appeal to the pseudo-religious instinct, evidently as prevalent four hundred years ago as it is in these days of "The

Christian" and "Ben Hur." Breathe the truth gently, for it is nigh unto heresy: "Henry V." certainly was built to hit the popular-priced audience of its day a knock-out blow.

Because "Henry V." was devised for hurrah purposes, it was able to stand a spectacular revival such as Mr. Mansfield gave it. Indeed, it demanded exactly that sort of treatment to make it bearable on the modern stage. We are not especially interested in Shakespearian glorification of old England, but we do like vivid pictures; and a better foundation for a glorious spectacle never was invented. Mr. Mansfield amply proved that. Moreover, one watched the pictorial "Henry V." with an approving conscience. For was it not Shakespeare, and therefore eminently edifying? There was, to be sure, for the serious-minded, the character of Henry V., and there was, too, the poetry, fresh, jubilant, spontaneous; but

neither Henry as a character study, nor Shakespeare as a poet, count very heavily when this play is acted. It is a spectacle, — it must be a spectacle, — first, last, and all the time. If you want to study the character of Henry, better by far do it in your library. If you want to enjoy the poetry, better by far read it by yourself.

There are any number of fine-sounding, spirited, and richly declamatory speeches in "Henry V.," but there is absolutely no dramatic development. There is also a great deal of turning this way and that — for all the world as if he were a tailor's model — of a personage called Henry V. But there is no searching examination of the Henry V. character. The king is exhibited in various phases — ambitiously resolved on war; generously and pityingly forgiving, even though he must punish, those who have turned traitor to him; gallantly and tactfully leading his soldiers to victory; forcibly impress-

ing his enemies with the inflexibility of his purpose; courageous in the face of great odds, steadfast always in his faith, but never pharisaical, loving a wholesome jest and unconsciously democratic, a generous victor and a modest, manly lover. In all these lights is Henry displayed, but the illumination almost invariably comes from without rather than from within. Henry says things which show him to be this, that, or the other, but he rarely does things that make the motive behind the action apparent without explanatory words.

A play like "Hamlet" works from within outward, and one is chiefly interested, not in what Hamlet does, but in what he is. Therefore scenery, costumes, and processionals are of comparatively little importance. Modest and unobtrusive and harmonious, they assist the imagination. The instant, however, scenic effects withdraw the attention from the action, that instant they become a posi-

tive detriment to an artistic production. With "Henry V." the case is wholly different. There being no compelling dramatic action to be nursed and nurtured, no character to be carefully and logically unfolded, the Shakespearian spectacular scheme can be loaded with the full burden of modern stagecraft, and the Shakespearian poetry and humour will be as precious gems sparkling with brilliancy through it all. The producer, however, must avoid the blunder of sacrificing speed for bigness, for even the most gorgeous and massive of stage pictures cannot compensate for slowness. Mr. Mansfield, it should be stated, attained the most marvellous celerity in shifting scenery. Scene followed scene with swiftness and accuracy, and the rests between the acts were cut down to the very last second. The result was a Shakespearian production that, in spite of its tremendously heavy staging, did not impress one as being overweighted

with settings. The action was continuous and without drag, and the interest was constantly maintained.

There were two ways in which one might consider the acting of this play. He might take the company as a whole, ignoring individuals. Then he must praise highly. The general average of acting was unusually good. But there was reason for this. Comparatively few of the players, with the exception of Mr. Mansfield, had much verse to speak. They had been drilled, drilled, drilled, until they knew perfectly their places in the pictures, and, inasmuch as they did not have to speak, their capable action enabled one to carry away the idea that he had seen an exceptionally well rounded performance of a Shakespearian play. The modern actor has many good qualities, but the ability to read Shakespearian verse is rarely one of them. Yet, the main thing in a Shakespearian production is to get the lines to the audience, —

they are always good enough to make their own effects, if their meaning and intention can be made reasonably plain. Mr. Mansfield apparently recognised this, for he simplified the action in all instances where the interest was centred in what was being said rather than on what was being done. Scarcely any movement was permitted in many of the scenes, — those before Harfleur and those showing the English camp before the battle of Agincourt being examples.

Mr. Mansfield himself was by no means above critical attention as a reader. His voice was not always pleasant, and his enunciation was often not as clear and distinct as one might have wished. He assuredly lacked the bell-like quality of tone that is so helpful to the speaker who would make every word understood. Nor was Mr. Mansfield's handling of the verse anywhere near perfect. He was inclined to be jerky, and to chop his lines into sections. But Mr. Mansfield had

the saving grace of authority. He spoke impressively, if not perfectly, and he spoke intelligently even when one could not understand what he said, — which was something of a paradox. Moreover, he exhaled that magic weaver of spells, the dramatic and theatric atmosphere. One actor in Mr. Mansfield's company really did read well, — James L. Carhart, who played the Duke of Exeter. He delivered the defiances of Henry to Charles of France with a richness of elocutionary power and a boldness of sweeping gesture that fairly gave wings to the words. Mr. Carhart, understand me, was not at all of the declamatory school. He was simply a good reader, who did not look on Shakespearian verse as something with which to juggle.

Style was thoroughly characteristic of Mr. Mansfield's "Henry V." He looked and acted and felt the king. He gave the air of distinction, of royalty, of being to the manner

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RICHARD MANSFIELD

As Henry V. in "King Henry V."

born. One might say that he did not in personal appearance fully meet the ideal of the handsome King Harry, but that was a minor and superficial detail. Mr. Mansfield realised the ideal mentally, and after he had accomplished that, the matter of looks was a mere bagatelle.

Mr. Mansfield's most telling speech was the one to the Mayor of Harfleur, demanding the surrender of the town. This was delivered wholly without heroics, without even a single gesture, if I recall correctly; but the right feeling was behind each word, consequently every phrase counted. The St. Crispin's Day speech was vivid. Very beautiful was the prayer before the battle, and right stern was the "Once more into the breach, dear friends," harangue. There was splendid royalty and deep sentiment in the scene of the unmasking of the traitors, and the wooing of Katherine was permeated with delicious comedy.

One of the most popular impersonations in the Mansfield production of "Henry V." was the Fluellen of A. G. Andrews. Before finding any fault with Mr. Andrews's conception of the character, it is but fair to state that he acted the part strictly according to theatrical tradition, which holds that the Welshman should be a man of small physique, with a squeaky voice and a general atmosphere of meanness, — the direct opposite in personal appearance and mannerisms to the bold, intrepid, honest man behind the mask.

That this is the highest conception of the character, especially as an acting part, I do not believe, any more than I believe that the traditional representation of Polonius in "Hamlet," as an idiot in his dotage, is correct. Polonius was egotistical, vain, and worldly. He was an ass, but not a silly ass. Polonius was the trusted counsellor of the crafty Claudius, who, whatever may have been his moral failings, was clever enough not to

have chosen a puttering, foolish old man to run matters in the kingdom of Denmark. Polonius's advice to his son Laertes distinctly showed that this traditional clown was at least a man of sound politic sense. So far from being an antique, shaky at the knees, Polonius was the most accomplished of courtiers.

Henry himself calls Fluellen a man of "much care and valour," but "out of fashion," and the king's respect for his eccentric countryman is plainly displayed in the license that he permits in Fluellen, who is never rebuked for speaking his mind, even when in doing so he grows offensively loquacious in the king's presence. Hippisley in Garrick's time is reported to have acted Fluellen without playfulness and without caprice, and those who saw the Rignold production of "Henry V.," twenty-five years ago, recall the Fluellen of Mr. Thorn as a personage of unmistakable dignity.

The sincere, brave nature of Fluellen be-

hind the Welshman's caprices and awkward eccentricities should be plainly revealed by the actor, and this, as the character came to me, was just what Mr. Andrews did not do. His Fluellen appeared to be wholly ridiculous, without weight and without dignity, a ludicrously conceited and strutting bantam cock, a boaster and a braggart. The outward characteristics were precisely those of the man himself. One wondered that Henry bore with him. This Fluellen was amusing, to be sure; he was excellent low comedy. But he never reached above the level of low comedy. Mr. Andrews reaped his laughs at the expense and degradation of a character, in the drawing of which Shakespeare took much pains. I do not intend to imply that Fluellen should be made ponderously serious, though it should be ever remembered that Fluellen always took himself with profound seriousness. He should be acted so as to win for him one's respect.

WILLIAM FAVERSHAM

As Lord Algy, with Joseph Wheelock, Jr., as Morley, in "Lord and Lady Algy."

CHAPTER IX.

WILLIAM FAVERSHAM.

A NEW quality was developed in William Faversham, who for a number of seasons had been pursuing a pleasant, but scarcely distinguished way, as the leading man of the Empire Theatre Company of New York, when the opportunity came to him to make public his wonderfully vivid character study of Lord Algy in R. C. Carton's thoroughly delightful light comedy, "Lord and Lady Algy." Mr. Faversham may be said in this part to have abandoned for the first time self-consciousness, and the most distressing of his fixed and illusion-dispelling mannerisms. One of the worst of these was the Faversham proposal of marriage. No one, who ever saw

Faversham telling a girl how much he loved her, can forget how he used to hunch up his shoulders while he breathed passionate nothings into the young woman's left ear. I never could understand — I do not now, for that matter — why, with Faversham, there always was such close connection between hunch-up shoulders and undying affection. However, it is fact that Mr. Faversham's most artistic work has been done in two plays in which he had no proposals to make, — in "Lord and Lady Algy," and in Leo Trevor's "Brother Officers."

John Hinds, in this latter comedy, marks the apex of Mr. Faversham's achievements up to the present time. Though the play itself was not on a par with the Carton product, Hinds was a more weighty article than Lord Algy. It is interesting to notice that both of these were character parts, a fact which makes pertinent the theory that Mr. Faversham had previously been persistently

missing his vocation. There seems no reasonable cause to doubt that he is a far better character actor than he is a juvenile leading man.

"Lord and Lady Algy" was a wonderfully compact little play. Except in the second act, when extra characters were necessary to give colour to the fancy-dress ball, not a person nor an incident was wasted. The construction at times was a little too apparent, — the business with the photograph in the first act, for example, — and to this lack of subtilty was due to a considerable extent, I think, the impression of farcing that many received. This impression was deepened by Lord Algy's drunken scene. Intoxication is so closely associated with farce that an undiscriminating mind might easily have failed to distinguish between Faversham's intoxicated Lord Algy, conceived in a comedy vein, and the conventional "drunk" of the stage, conceived in a spirit of burlesque.

The author's mistake was in making the scene so prominent. Naturally, it would have been merely an incident, and as such it would have taken its proper place in the comedy without betraying its farcical tendencies; but the author expanded it into a situation — indeed, almost into an entire act. Mr. Faversham's surprising virtuosity and idealised realism kept alive the comedy spirit and at the same time prevented boredom. Throughout the whole play Mr. Faversham's acting was discriminating, spontaneous, and tempered with a fine sense of humour. He was distinguished in method, resourceful and varied in expression, and reposeful in action. His work was at all times finely finished.

The atmosphere of "Lord and Lady Algy" was something that the average theatregoer in this country had to accept as a fact rather than recognise as a condition. We really have no conception of the horse-

racing gentleman as a type, for horse-racing is not an institution over here as it is in England. What we could appreciate in "Lord and Lady Algy" was the human nature of the characters who moved in this strange environment. The essential truth, the fundamental sincerity, and the unprovincialism of the character drawing, alone made it possible for the comedy to appeal successfully to a wide and varied constituency. It did not seem to me that "Lord and Lady Algy" was accepted merely because it was good fun, — that was, in the farcical spirit. The work made a deeper impression than that. While there were characters which were burlesqued in spirit — the Marquis of Quarmby was one — and situations which were evolved simply for the laugh that was in them, the play, as a whole, reflected the genuine comedy spirit.

As I take it, the difference between farce and comedy is, in a final deduction, merely one of feeling. Dryden stated the condition

approximately when he said that the persons and actions of a farce are all unnatural and the manners false. Surely, there was no such state of affairs in "Lord and Lady Algy." Lord Algy was not false even in that ridiculous scene of intoxication. Lady Algy, whose unconventionality and possible absurdity from our point of view made her seem forced and unnatural at times, radiated a womanliness far too deep for farcical treatment. As for Mawley Jemmett, the jockey, no finer comedy could be asked.

The one thing that saved "Brother Officers from mediocrity was the character creation of Lieutenant John Hinds. This was something in the nature of a dramatic inspiration, and it did yeoman service in providing a first act of rich interest; and, in conjunction with the development of wholly unexpected strength and beauty in the part of Baroness Roydon, it added a third act of singular pathetic power.

A line on the playbill quoted from Tennyson gave the key to John Hinds: "Here and there a cotter's babe is royal born by right divine." From an environment on the criminal border line, this man Hinds had fought his way from the ranks to an army commission. His bravery had won him a Victoria Cross, and his manliness had gained him the greater victory of respect and honour among his fellow officers. The play — or, to be more exact, the last act of the play — showed his greatest victory of all, — the greatest victory a man or a woman may win, — the victory over self. Never mind if in "Brother Officers" this idealistic struggle was set forth with not the greatest skill, nor the greatest delicacy, nor the greatest subtilty. It was a worthy theme. That it might have been better done, is true, but that it was done at all, was infinitely to Mr. Trevor's credit.

In this splendidly effective character Mr.

Faversham could hardly have failed to make a deep impression, and his acting reached farther beneath the surface than has often been the case. With the exception of his Lord Algy, which was light comedy, and therefore free from comparison with a straight comedy part like Hinds, Mr. Faversham has been accustomed to act himself, and, in so doing, he was on the verge of committing himself irredeemably to a series of uncomfortable histrionic habits. In Hinds, however, he got rid of these entirely. He "composed" his character in the first act with convincing clearness and with wonderful realism, and he clung to this composition with tenacity throughout the play. Hinds was a far different fellow in the last act than he was in the first. Mr. Faversham succeeded in making this difference plain, and he succeeded in the far more difficult task of making it evident, as well, that Hinds was always Hinds — with a difference. Not often

WILLIAM FAVERSHAM

As Lieut. John Hinds in "Brother Officers."

is a harder problem presented to a player than that solved by Mr. Faversham in the first act. He had to show a man, absolutely uncultured externally, with no knowledge even of the most elementary social usages, and wholly without taste or breeding. Still he had to make apparent this man's inherent nobleness, his natural manliness, and his splendid sincerity. The best evidence that Mr. Faversham fulfilled these conditions was found in the profound pity that one felt for Hinds in all his social difficulties. I laughed at him, to be sure, and still I could not have felt more sorry for him.

One of Dramatist Trevor's theatrical expedients irritated me beyond measure; it was so obvious a wrong to John Hinds, of whom I had grown exceedingly fond by the time the last act was reached. The situation was this: Hinds was in love with the pretty Baroness Roydon. She loved the weak-willed Lieutenant Pleydell, and he in turn

loved her. It was quite necessary that Hinds should get inside of this complicated ring of affection. He, of course, knew that he loved the baroness, but he was on the point of fooling himself with the idea that perhaps some day the young woman might love him. This was so utterly impossible that Mr. Trevor felt obliged to enlighten Hinds, in order to keep him from making a needless spectacle of himself, and also to give him a chance to be noble and leave the scene a willing sacrifice, and quite the biggest man in the play.

How do you suppose the simple-minded Mr. Trevor accomplished Mr. Hinds's disillusionment? In no other way than by the wholly absurd means of an overheard conversation. A certain Miss Johnson in the play, having in the course of the action engaged herself to marry an amusing comedy earl with narrow caste ideas, forthwith confided to her betrothed all the love-affairs of the

household, while Hinds, sitting unseen in a big armchair, heard everything, — how he loved the baroness, but could never marry her in the world, because he would surely get on her nerves. "There are two kinds of men in the world," wisely decreed the little earl, "gentlemen and the rest." Hinds, as he told himself later, belonged to "the rest" in the earl's worldly and snobbish, but not wholly untruthful classification. This scene in "Brother Officers" was thorough "rot." Hinds may not have been a gentleman within the earl's narrow limitations, but he was a man. He knew that he had no right to listen to a conversation about himself and his friends, and he would not have listened. What right has an author to make one of his creations do a dishonourable act, wholly unlike the character as developed, simply to further the author's story? It is almost as bad as teaching one's child to steal.

During almost the entire theatrical season of 1900–1901, Mr. Faversham was ill, and consequently his only new impersonation of the year was his Henry Beauclerc, in the Empire Theatre revival of Victorien Sardou's "Diplomacy." This production of the famous drama was a thoroughly good one, but in no sense a wonderfully great one. It lacked in particular a strong Zicka, for Jessie Millward was only adequately melodramatic in the character. The ideal Zicka is as theatrically brilliant as a municipal display of fireworks on a Fourth of July evening. Miss Millward did not attain that standard. Possibly she tried to make Zicka natural. If she did, it was a mistake. Zicka is flaming red.

"Diplomacy," however, is a play that to a considerable extent acts itself. As machinery it is superb. The plot is a marvellous theatrical conception, and its development is a masterpiece of invention. "Diplomacy"

is interesting, too, in its way, after the boredom of explanations that are required in the first act to get the story in working order are over, and when Dora is not too overwhelmingly sentimental. But this interest — in my case at least — is similar to the interest that an engineer shows in an intricate specimen of machinery. I feel that Sardou's dramatic artisanship is on exhibition, that he is giving an exhibition of the mechanism of play-writing, explaining how episodes may be focussed into a climax, and how situations may be developed to the greatest possible advantage. I am quite sure that he has forgotten all about the soul that a play must have to make it a living reality. For plays are like human beings in this, — that it is not the outward seeming which makes them what they are, but the inward feeling.

Of course, in passing restrictions on "Diplomacy," one must remember that the drama was first acted in this country in

1885, and that all its clever tricks and devices, which were novel and effective through surprise when the play itself was new, have since been used by borrowing playwrights time and time again. Still, the genuine human quality in a play can never be lost, and it is therefore fair to assume, if "Diplomacy" is unconvincing now, that it must have been unconvincing then.

In the matter of character, "Diplomacy" is decidedly less original than in plot. Moreover, Sardou made practically no attempt at exposition. The personages in the drama were simply stated as facts, and then pushed into doing the work assigned them. In other words, the spectator's attention was directed, not to what these men and women were, but to what they were doing. It was true that they were roughly classified, but their classification was distinctly theatrical, — very broad and plain, but not deep nor subtle nor distinguished. One quickly

summed them up something in this fashion: Henry Beauclerc, cool, calm, and collected, the balance-wheel of the action; Julian Beauclerc, warm-hearted, impulsive, and consequently idiotic; Baron Stein, dialect diplomat, very blasé and very shifty; Zicka, world-against-her adventuress; Dora, sentimental heroine, tender and tearful.

The successful acting of such parts is — assuming that the actor be possessed of a fair technical equipment — chiefly a matter of personality. Only through the force of his personal appeal can the player establish the semblance of an illusion or compel the slightest conviction. Especially is this true of those parts whose theatricalism is somewhat below the surface. Thus Baron Stein, obviously a melodramatic figurehead, holds one by his very extravagance. He is so palpably impossible that the imagination takes a romantic delight in dressing him up as a Frankenstein possibility. But characters like

Henry, Julian, and Dora superficially parallel life, and unconsciously one compares the actors playing them with persons in real life. Then personality counts, for it is only through personality that sincerity can be felt.

I liked Mr. Faversham's Henry Beauclerc, because I found the impersonation strongly imbued with this quality of sincerity. It is true that the actor's work was displeasing in certain respects. Often he swaggered in his walk in a manner strikingly suggestive of Lieutenant John Hinds in "Brother Officers." Again he was monotonous and stilted in gesture, drawling in voice and indistinct in enunciation. Yet Mr. Faversham displayed both authority and distinction in the forceful scenes, when, as master of the situation, Henry held and coolly played the trump-cards. Mr. Faversham was deliberate without being weighty, and calm without being ponderous. He suggested, by means of a frank smile that was wonderfully humanising, that Henry,

while he may have been a diplomatist in a melodrama, was at heart a good fellow, and not at all the prig he appeared to be. Indeed, I am quite sure that it was this smile which saved Mr. Faversham's characterisation from being positively the ordinary thing.

CHAPTER X.

STUART ROBSON IN "OLIVER GOLDSMITH."

STUART ROBSON produced "Oliver Goldsmith," a three-act comedy by Augustus Thomas, in Albany, New York, on November 30, 1899. Mr. Robson began that season very ambitiously, bringing out in Providence, Rhode Island, on September 11, 1899, "The Gadfly," a dramatisation by Edward E. Rose of Mrs. Voynich's novel, in which he acted a serious character. The experiment was wholly a failure, not any more so, perhaps, because Mr. Robson tried to be serious, than because the play itself was wholly impossible.

Possibly, for the reason that it had to be hurried to completion to meet an emergency,

STUART ROBSON

As Oliver Goldsmith in "Oliver Goldsmith."

though I do not know positively that this was a fact, "Oliver Goldsmith," "The Gadfly's" successor, was a curiously uneven product of dramatic workmanship. It struck one as unfinished in every way. The first act was remarkably good, fine old comedy in atmosphere, rich in character studies, brisk, interesting, and ingenious in action; but distinction largely departed after this, leaving two-thirds of the play irritatingly inadequate.

Mr. Thomas called "Oliver Goldsmith" a comedy, and if one bore in mind the indefiniteness of all play classifications, comedy did as well for an identifying label as anything else. Mr. Thomas, however, would have been more correct, and at the same time fairer to himself, if he had escaped in some manner all the trammels of conventional dramatic writing that the terms comedy and play suggest. "Oliver Goldsmith" was in dramatic form, but it was, nevertheless, only in the broadest sense a play. I should de-

scribe it as a collection of character studies of certain personages prominent in literary, political, and theatrical history. That would be, it is true, a clumsy enough designation, but certainly the artistic measure of Mr. Thomas's work would have been more justly taken, if it had been in some manner indicated that in "Oliver Goldsmith" one was expected to interest himself wholly in persons as they were, and not in the least in what they did.

I acknowledge that "Oliver Goldsmith" did try to tell some sort of a story, the main theme being Goldsmith's love for Mary Horneck; but the plot, as far as vital interest or conviction regarding its probability were concerned, counted for little. Goldsmith was represented in the first act as mistaking the home of Mr. Featherstone for an inn, the episode giving him the idea which resulted in "She Stoops to Conquer." The second act showed a rehearsal of that famous comedy on the stage of the Covent Garden Theatre.

The third act pictured Goldsmith in his poverty, desperately in debt to his landlady, and characteristically impractical in the expenditure of the little money that came to him. The play ended with Mary Horneck in Goldsmith's arms. Before the fall of the final curtain the poet spoke a "tag" about his health and the woman he loved, the meaning of which was not apparent. It probably was intended to convey the idea that, although Mr. Goldsmith was embracing Miss Horneck, he would not live long enough to make her his wife.

In the course of his three acts Mr. Thomas introduced various encyclopediated incidents, anecdotes, and sayings connected with Goldsmith, and in this way mixed enough truth with his fiction to give his product at least a historical flavour. This method, of course, is perfectly legitimate when it is skilfully done. And it was skilfully done in the present case. Still, none of these things

made "Oliver Goldsmith" a play, for the chief interest in Mr. Thomas's work was not in the plot, nor in the theme, nor in the action, nor in the development of character. It was centred in the personages who appeared in the action; and it was centred in them, not because they did entertaining things on the stage or displayed interesting traits, but because we knew that they were modelled after men and women of importance and of individuality who had lived some two hundred and fifty years before.

There is a difference in the view-point from which one regards the historical personage on the stage and the dramatic character standing boldly by himself without the antiquity "prop" or the convenient support of the enthusiastic hero-worshipper. The historical personage has at the start a leading advantage in previously excited interest. His familiar name catches the attention, and if one be in the least unsophisticated, he finds

himself anticipating with no little eagerness the impression that he expects to receive from the actor's counterfeit. But there all advantage ceases, for the historical personage, on the stage, having a reputation to live up to, is quite apt to be disappointing and disillusionising. One cannot help regarding the historical personage as an established fact, and one's main curiosity regarding such a character is the verifying of this fact. The purely imaginary dramatic character, on the contrary, comes to one replete with fresh and undetermined possibilities. It is a new friend, which may in time twine itself about one's heart and enshrine itself in one's affections. It is unexplored human nature, a new and intensely fascinating document, mayhap, to be read and to be studied and to be thoughtfully considered.

When one perceived Dr. Samuel Johnson's name on the playbill, he immediately provided himself with a mental image of that

worthy and catalogued the facts that he knew regarding him, — that he wrote a dictionary, that he was probably a most intolerable bore, that a spindle-shanked creature named Boswell always tagged him about like a faithful poodle, and that they always addressed one another in the most respectful manner as "sir." Consequently, one's attention was fixed, not on Doctor Johnson as a character in a play by Augustus Thomas, but on the historical Doctor Johnson; and one wondered if Mr. H. A. Weaver, Sr., impersonating Doctor Johnson, would fill the idea of the old fossil, if he would look like Doctor Johnson, and talk and act like him. Exactly similar was the interest in Mr. Boswell, the greatest echo that ever lived; in Davy Garrick, the actor; in Edmund Burke, the Irishman; and in Oliver Goldsmith, the original Bohemian, and the greatest and the sincerest one of them all. Goldsmith was a Bohemian because he could not be anything

else, while most men are Bohemians because they are either fools or knaves.

That it is quite possible to take a historical personage and turn him into a dramatic character, was shown by Mr. Weaver in his presentation of Doctor Johnson. In this remarkable study the actor summed up the rich substance of nearly half a century of faithful playing of parts. In recreating a historical figure, it is not enough for the actor to be pictorially correct; he must also get inside the original's personality, and must contrive to breathe forth the original's atmosphere. Doctor Johnson has always been to me very much of an individuality, positively the superlative of boredom. Where the impression came from I do not know, unless because for a disagreeable school task, I once was forced to read Johnson's "Lives of the English Poets." I think of Doctor Johnson as a monstrosity of inflated egotism, of bumptious arrogance, and of intellect ponder-

ous and even inert, because of its own weight. Probably these notions do the great man injustice, and certain it is they are utterly lacking in reverence for this dead and buried giant of the eighteenth century, whose books — merciful dispensation — I do not have to read, whose didactically expounded wisdom I do not have to listen to, and whose laborious jokes I do not have to laugh at.

Nevertheless, if I wronged the great Doctor Johnson, Mr. Weaver wronged him equally, for Mr. Weaver's Doctor Johnson was my Doctor Johnson in every point and particular. As a physical composition, this impersonation was no less remarkable than as a mental reflection. Mr. Weaver looked Doctor Johnson with strange insistency, — the hangdog mouth that suggested bodily disease, the peculiar, indescribable expression about the eyes that denoted settled conceit and inherent vanity, the creeping walk of the bodily indolent man of sedentary habits, and always

that exasperating trick of demanding first place and first attention as a right. I enjoyed this Doctor Johnson, — he was, with all his book-learning, palpably so gross and so mean and so small. He was wretchedly without inspiration. However much he might speak his admiration for artistic beauty, he never really felt the slightest emotional thrill from it. Still, you say, he was good to Oliver Goldsmith. Yes, as good as a Samuel Johnson could be : he patronised genius, and patted himself on the back while doing it.

In acting Oliver Goldsmith, Stuart Robson was surprisingly successful in making the Goldsmith personality assume the inevitable Robson mannerisms and emerge from the ordeal with the Goldsmith character still in evidence. Mr. Robson's impersonation was always intelligent and often decidedly brilliant. Goldsmith's physical unloveliness was sufficiently indicated ; his awkwardness was made apparent without grotesque exaggeration, and

he was, naturally enough for play-acting purposes, endowed with a dry wit in repartee that, according to tradition, he by no means possessed. Mr. Robson, however, laboured under a tremendous disadvantage in not having been Oliver Goldsmith before he was Bertie the Lamb in "The Henrietta." I do not mean this as a slur on a conscientious and high-idealed actor. It is simply the formal statement of an evident fact. It seems amply proven that Mr. Robson cannot get away from his mannerisms, his rising and falling voice, his impossible elocution, his delayed gestures, and his uncouth postures. These peculiarities fitted Bertie perfectly, with the embarrassing result that Mr. Robson has, to an extent, remained Bertie ever since. Now I believe that the Robson peculiarities were as thoroughly in harmony with a stage Oliver Goldsmith as they were with Bertie, but unfortunately, eye and ear refused readily to follow reason in the matter. Oliver Gold-

smith was unquestionably higher art than Bertie. Bertie was a farcical impression, a wonderfully vivid one, but still only an impression; Goldsmith was a well-rounded conception, lacking, however, a distinct quality of pervading pathos that would have made it histrionically great. Mr. Robson could not be pathetic, and this defect in his artistic equipment robbed his Oliver Goldsmith of a measure of effectiveness, for the part as drawn by Mr. Thomas and as conceived by the actor, cried out for sympathetic tears.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MELODRAMATIC JAMES O'NEILL.

JAMES O'NEILL first appeared in "The Musketeers," adapted by Sidney Grundy from Alexandre Dumas's novel, "Les Trois Mousquetaires," at Montreal, Canada, on March 6, 1899. The play was originally produced in London on November 3, 1898, with Beerbohm Tree as D'Artagnan. This spectacular melodrama served Mr. O'Neill during the season of 1899–1900, and it seemed as if by means of it Mr. O'Neill had at last shaken off that Old-Man-of-the-Sea, "Monte Cristo," which had so persistently clung to him for some fifteen years. It was not so to be, however, for in the fall of 1900 again came into view the everlasting Edmond

JAMES O'NEILL

As Edmond Dantes in "Monte Cristo."

Dantes, this time amid surroundings so massive and so gorgeous that one scarcely recognised him as the same old sixpence of "The world is mine!" familiarity.

Sidney Grundy's version of "The Three Musketeers" was arranged in ten tableaux. In most particulars it differed widely from other stage adaptations, and in many instances it also wandered far from the novel. The main departure from Dumas was made in the character of Constance, who, according to Mr. Grundy's way of thinking, was a more proper person as Bonacieux's daughter than as his wife. The prologue, which showed the branding of Anne de Breuil to the accompaniment of much thunder and lightning, was also entirely new to the stage. The second tableau, depicting the arrival of D'Artagnan at the inn outside Paris, was not unlike the old-time version, first played by Charles Fechter, I believe, and later by Alexander Salvini. The scene ended, how-

ever, with a fight between D'Artagnan and the Cardinal's soldiers, which was new. The third tableau combined the meeting of D'Artagnan with the three musketeers and his quarrels with them, the introduction to De Treville, the duel between D'Artagnan and Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, and the glorious fray with the Cardinal's men. This forceful combination was also a new idea.

The fourth tableau flew directly in the face of Dumas's story. D'Artagnan was represented as repeating — a most improbable circumstance — Athos's melancholy life-story to Miladi, and then discovering, after he had worked this mischief, the fleur-de-lis branded on that precious female's arm. Naturally enough, the woman was furiously angry at the inadvertent revelation, and raged like a fury. Failing in her attempt to stab D'Artagnan, she shouted with might and main for the Cardinal's guard. The valiant band came all right, but was promptly put out of working

order by the valiant Gascon, who escaped from his uncomfortable predicament by jumping through a window, leaving Miladi to comfort her perturbed spirit by vigorously pummelling a defenceless and inoffensive couch.

The fifth tableau introduced the Duke of Buckingham, who proceeded to loan his fine clothes to Bonacieux, which kind act led to the unfortunate provision merchant's arrest in the duke's stead. From this point Mr. Grundy strayed into the episode of the diamond necklace. He pictured the meeting between the queen and Buckingham, the plotting of the Cardinal and Miladi, the inviting of the queen to the ball, at which she must wear the diamond necklace, — in Mr. Grundy's version, however, a cluster of diamonds instead of a string, — the arrival of D'Artagnan in the nick of time with the jewels, and the downfall of the Cardinal and Miladi. How and where D'Artagnan

came into possession of the gems was not explained by Mr. Grundy.

But the most astonishing happening of the whole play occurred at the end of the eighth tableau. The queen had received her invitation to the ball, and had been told that she must wear all her jewels.

"Alas!" she exclaims, "I am undone. Who will save me?"

"I will," remarks a voice from nowhere in particular. The helmet pops off an heretofore unnoticed coat of mail over in the corner, revealing the smiling countenance of the intrepid D'Artagnan. It was for all the world like the unexpected appearance of the omnipresent detective in the thrilling tales, with which we beguiled many a fleeting hour in happy boyhood days.

The remembrance of this luridly impossible scene encourages me to breathe a suspicion that grew stronger and stronger as Mr. Grundy's play developed. I have an idea that

this Grundy version was something in the line of a practical joke. I should not be surprised to learn that all the time Mr. Grundy was putting it together he was laughing in his sleeve. For Mr. Grundy, although he is an Englishman, must have a slight sense of humour. I have an idea, too, that Mr. O'Neill, regarding whose sense of humour, since he is an Irishman, there can be no doubt at all, thoroughly appreciated Mr. Grundy's little joke. O'Neill acted D'Artagnan seriously enough, with valour prodigious, impetuosity irrepressible, gallantry incomparable, shrewdness astonishing; but that Mr. O'Neill had a mighty good time in the midst of all the hifalutin, there could be no doubt. More than once I fancied that I could detect the telltale twinkle of the eye that betokened rare sport.

The spectacular production of the Charles Fechter version of "Monte Cristo" was first shown to the public in Boston on September

18, 1900. There was no gainsaying the elaborateness, completeness, and general effectiveness of this scenic glorification. The first one of the nine big sets represented the port of Marseilles, and the spectators were treated to the sight of a full-rigged ship coming into the harbour. This scene was also notable for the excellent handling of the crowds in the foreground. Another mechanical wonder was the Château d'If of the second act, a massive-looking structure, which split up into sections in the most bewildering fashion when it came time to show the open sea and the escape of Dantes from prison. Before the revelations of the conservatory and ballroom of the Hotel de Morcerf, pictured in the fourth act, all that had gone before faded into insignificance. Solidness and brilliancy characterised this magnificent setting.

Regarding "Monte Cristo" as a play there is little that is worth writing at this late day.

It is, of course, the most obvious melodrama, unnatural, forced, and poorly indicative of the absorbing power of Alexandre Dumas's romance. Yet it has decided theatrical persuasiveness and interest, and it shines with a light almost of inspiration in comparison with several of the hodge-podge dramatisations of romances that were placed on the stage during the season of 1900–01.

Mr. O'Neill's Dantes was always picturesque, consistent in conception, surprisingly natural in view of the strained sentiment that he was called upon to speak. The characterisation was not altogether wanting in superficial pathos, and the actor's skill in working up to and sustaining climaxes made the impersonation remarkably effective dramatically.

When this last production of "Monte Cristo" was made, the old Fechter version was revised to the extent of making Mercedes Edmond's wife and Albert a legitimate child.

This was accomplished by means of an interpolated marriage scene, and its effect on the drama as a whole made one think of the remark about straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. In the old version of the play Dantes was arrested before the ceremony, wedding him to Mercedes, had been performed. Subsequently, Mercedes became the wife of Fernande, and Albert, Dantes's son, passed as the son of Mercedes and Fernande. After Mercedes had been married to Dantes in the new version, poor Fernande was in a most unpleasant situation. The exposition of the plot demanded that Dantes should believe Albert to be Fernande's son. Yet it would not do to marry Mercedes to Fernande, after having previously married her to Dantes, for bigamy — even unconscious bigamy — would have been more shocking than illegitimacy. It was really a pretty problem what to do with Fernande, so pretty, indeed, that the revisers ignored

it completely. They calmly required us to believe that Fernande and Mercedes lived blamelessly together for eighteen years, man and wife in the eyes of the world, even in the eyes of their own household. Such was the absurdity resulting from Puritanical shying at Dumas's minor peccadillo.

CHAPTER XII.

JAMES A. HERNE'S "SAG HARBOUR."

"SAG HARBOUR" proved to be the last one of the series of dramas of which James A. Herne was the author, and the last play, too, in which he appeared as a player, for this prominent American actor and playwright died in his home in New York City on June 2, 1901, after an eight weeks' illness. Mr. Herne had been in poor health for a long time. Even as far back as the fall of 1899, when "Sag Harbour" was first acted, he was not himself physically. At that time he suffered severely from rheumatism, though he continued playing without interruption, except for the summer rest, until February, 1901. While touring the one-night stands

JAMES A. HERNE

As Capt. Dan Marble in "Sag Harbour."

of the West, he was compelled to discontinue acting. A short rest benefited him, and he resumed his work at the opening of the Chicago engagement in "Sag Harbour." Again, however, he was obliged to give up, and this time he went to West Baden, Indiana, to recuperate. A week there apparently helped him greatly, and once more he attempted acting. It was no use, however, and Mr. Herne said good-bye to the stage for ever.

Mr. Herne's theatrical career was a notable one of forty-two years' duration. He received his training under the severe discipline of the old stock company days, and was successively leading man and star, manager and dramatist. In addition, he was a thoroughly capable and an unusually artistic stage-manager. Mr. Herne's first play was "Hearts of Oak," a melodrama, produced in Chicago in 1878, and so lasting a popular success that it is still touring the country. Next came "The Minute Man," produced in Philadelphia in 1885, and

"Drifting Apart," brought out in New York a little later, neither of them successful. "Margaret Fleming," acted in Boston in 1888, was the pioneer "problem play," an original and daring drama, which, however, never appealed to the public. Mr. Herne's biggest success was "Shore Acres," first played in Chicago in 1892. His most ambitious and worthiest drama was "Griffith Davenport," given for the first time in Washington, D. C., in January, 1899. The merits of this play, however, were not of the popular sort, and consequently the work was seen in only a few cities. "Sag Harbour" was first brought out in Boston on October 24, 1899. It proved to be typically Hernesque in workmanship, full of homely human nature, and amusing, characteristic local colour. These vital merits more than atoned for its lack of artistic finish in certain particulars of construction.

In calling Mr. Herne the representative dramatist of American country life, one is

only stating a recognised truth, and if one should put the case stronger yet, and designate him the representative American dramatist of his generation, one would probably be only foreshadowing a judgment that will be more authoritatively passed later. James A. Herne deserved his success and reputation. He was honest and he was faithful. He was a man with an ideal. He worked hard for such recognition as he won. He faced disaster bravely, and he refused to be discouraged. He never quit. To quote Israel Zangwill, "Nothing will alter my admiration for a man who has for years fought almost single-handed in the cause of artistic sincerity."

"Sag Harbour" was mainly notable for the rich quality of its humour. In this respect Mr. Herne fairly surpassed himself. It was homely, of course, the humour of honest and simple-minded men and women, who had not been refined into seeing suggestiveness and

indelicacy in blunt, old-fashioned frankness. Widow Russell's reminiscences of her husband were drolly true to life, and the juiciness of some of Capt. Dan Marble's observations was beyond compare. A playwright not so close to life as Mr. Herne would have made a wreck of such broadness, — he would have been vulgar and coarse where Mr. Herne was simply bluff and hearty. For instance, Captain Marble, who has long been courting Elizabeth Ann Turner, — so long that even he almost despairs of ever winning her, — declares that it is his firm belief that the only thing which keeps Elizabeth Ann from marrying him is the Book of Genesis, and the particular chapter in the Book of Genesis that contains all the "begets." The captain, with the best intentions in the world, becomes mixed up in a love-affair that forms the plot of the play. He is on the wrong tack, however, and instead of unravelling the tangle makes it worse than ever. "You've raised hell here," is his

sole comment when he learns his mistake, but no phrase could have been more to the point.

The plot of "Sag Harbour" was ordinary. It involved the fortunes of two brothers, both of whom loved the same woman. Mr. Herne called it "an old story," and so it was; but it was, nevertheless, a story that had an abiding sentimental interest, and one that made its sure appeal to every woman and, to a less degree, to every man. Moreover, a familiar theme lends itself readily to the quiet, life-like treatment that was Mr. Herne's unique characteristic. He put humanity into his plays, and one always finds the old stories, when adorned with sincerity and truth, the most touching.

Mr. Herne placed his action in Sag Harbour, a village on Long Island, which in the old days was a prosperous whaling port. With remarkable fidelity to nature, he transferred to the theatre the quaint atmosphere of a typical New England seaport, not by

means of an elaborately bedecked stage, for the scenery in "Sag Harbour" was decidedly a minor consideration, but by means of the spirit of straightforward honesty that shone through the characterisations. There were melodramatic touches, to be sure, but, except for these occasional lapses, mere theatrical artifice was never apparent.

The plot may be briefly outlined thus: Martha Reese, an orphan, is adopted when a child by Ben Turner, and she grows into womanhood in his home. He loves her, but fearing that she thinks him too old to be her husband, he dares not tell her of his love. In the meantime, she becomes betrothed to Frank Turner, Ben's younger brother, but Ben does not know of this; and when he is misled into thinking that Martha cares for him, he rushes through his proposal without giving her a chance to explain how matters stand. Martha, believing that Ben needs her more than Frank, marries him,

and for two years Ben does not learn the truth. By this time a child has been born, and Martha has come really to love her husband. But after Ben has heard of her former engagement to Frank, he finds it hard to believe, when Martha declares that she loves him, that she is speaking the truth, and, in his distress, he quarrels violently with her and with his brother. Of course, the final curtain falls on a complete reconciliation. Frank sees the hope of happiness in Jane Cauldwell, who long has loved him, and Capt. Dan Marble, whose blundering attempt to make every one happy was the first cause of the difficulty, and whose tact finally brought together husband and wife, is also rewarded in a way most satisfactory to him.

The main dramatic strength of "Sag Harbour" was in the last two acts. Ben has his eyes opened to the true state of affairs by overhearing a conversation between Martha and Frank. This leads to a scene power-

fully impressive. The two brothers almost come to blows, when Martha interferes and is roughly thrown aside by her husband, whose anger has well-nigh overwhelmed him. The ending of the play, except in one particular, was logical and thoroughly satisfactory. That one particular was the parcelling off of Frank. The idea may have been right enough, but the element of time made Frank's change from Martha to Jane, although she, to be sure, did all the wooing, altogether too sudden. The conclusion of the second act, it should be noted, was an especially fine bit of comedy. All unconscious of the tragic side of his betrothal, Ben called for champagne as the only fitting beverage in which to pledge his happiness, and it was with the assistance of the genial influence of this unaccustomed drink that Captain Marble won his Elizabeth.

Captain Marble, as presented by Mr. Herne, was one of those lovable characters

of which his Uncle Nat, in "Shore Acres," was so delightful a type. It was a perfect representation of gentleness and kindliness, a man, too, bubbling over with humour, and with a heart that inspired kindly sympathy. No one but Mr. Herne could so fully have expressed the moment when Captain Marble learned that he was to have the great desire of his life, a child of his own. Not a word was spoken, but one saw the wonder and the happiness of it all gradually dawn on him, and one believed him when he said, "You could have knocked me over with a feather."

A prosaic analysis of a Herne play is impossible. In developing a plot Mr. Herne was a law unto himself, and his subtilty defied the probing pen of the critic. He placed character above all else. This may seem a surprising statement to those who were accustomed to much talking about Mr. Herne's realism and who failed to see that this realism, after all, was only an appropriate

frame for character. Atmosphere, which Mr. Herne obtained with such surety, was necessary because it instantly put one in touch with the personages of his plays, and so became an important adjunct to the leading essential, the exposition of character. Neither were Mr. Herne's characters merely types. Of course, each one might be to a certain degree considered as one of a class, but one finds that quality everywhere apparent in real life. Belonging to a class, however, does not destroy individuality. Captain Marble, for example, was in no respect the same man as Nathaniel Berry, though one did unquestionably suggest the other.

MACLYN ARBUCKLE.

CHAPTER XIII.

MACLYN ARBUCKLE.

MACLYN ARBUCKLE was widely introduced to the playgoing public through the mediumship of a three-act farce by George H. Broadhurst, called "Why Smith Left Home." This work was originally produced in Adrian, Michigan, on August 17, 1898, and later it had the distinction of a successful run in London, a rare achievement for an American play. "Why Smith Left Home" was good, honest fun, and it deserved its vogue. It pointed the way along which the artistic farce should travel. Indeed, if Mr. Broadhurst had not been so prone to pursue conventionality, if he had not burdened his originality with the familiar boresome love-

affairs of a boresome old maid, with the tiresome tyranny of a mother-in-lawish aunt, and with the customary antics of a sporty though henpecked husband, one would be justified in declaring that "Why Smith Left Home" was itself travelling on the artistic highway previously mentioned. A drama is real when its plot is developed, not to exploit the mechanics of theatrical effect, but to further the exposition of character; and so general is this principle that it is exactly as applicable to farce as it is to tragedy. For instance, the human nature of the several interesting and original character studies in Mr. Broadhurst's play was none the less genuine because it was shown in a facetious instead of in a serious light. In farce, however, where exaggeration and burlesque are proper, character can be but superficially indicated by the dramatic action, and the actor can justly claim the credit for any subtle evidences of reality that may be noticeable in

the part that he assumes. His is the task of drawing the fine line between farcing and buffoonery.

By his acting of John Smith in this Broadhurst farce, Mr. Arbuckle immediately showed himself a light comedian of exceptional personality, of distinguished finesse, and of unusual comic power. It was masterful farcing throughout, deft, easy, sure, suggestive, and with a background of sincerity and solid characterisation that gave the personation reality and convincing power. Mr. Arbuckle was keen in his search for the ridiculous and constantly successful in finding it. Yet he was always self-contained, rarely boisterous, and under every circumstance faithful to his character. As an example of delicious and effective travesty I know of nothing better than his speech of rebuke in the last act to the meddlesome Aunt Mary. It was Mark Antony's funeral oration turned bottom side up.

"Why Smith Left Home" burlesqued that problem in domestic economy known as the servant girl question, and its satire was thoroughly United States. It could not be claimed that Mr. Broadhurst equalled in ingenuity and neatness of construction several farces of foreign workmanship that have been done in English. There was occasionally crudity and roughness in his action, which would never have been felt in the best of farcical writing. He loaded himself down with too much antiquated material, which was centred in a secondary plot dealing with the relations between a sentimental old maid and a blundering German count. All this was artistic dead wood, though fortunately its dullness was counterbalanced by the lively interest found in the main action. The idea of mixing up the servant girl question with the labour union problem was an inspiration; the idea of having the man of the house bribe the cook to cook as badly

as she knew how, so as to drive away unwelcome visitors, was another inspiration; and, in these days of farces dancing in mad circles around marital infelicity, it may be added that the idea of making a man really in love with his wife, and impervious to the blandishments of pretty housemaids and pretty masqueraders in short red gowns that revealed tantalising ankles, was a third inspiration.

Yet Mr. Broadhurst's three inspirations, potent as they were, would hardly have excited quite so much hilarity without the aid of the efficient company to which he entrusted his play; nor would his dialogue have seemed so snappy and appropriate, his occasional quaint twists of phrases so mirthful, and his bits of slang so pat, if they had not been spoken by actors alive to every possibility of humour and attentive to the emphasising of points. Besides Mr. Arbuckle, there was Mrs. Annie Yeamans

in that brilliant low comedy creation, Lavinia Daly, the "cook lady." Both of these actors, while playing in ideal farcical style, with full broad strokes and just the right amount of exaggeration, nevertheless gave two reproductions of living humanity. Mrs. Yeaman's "cook lady" was familiarly Hibernian. One would hesitate to call it a burlesque, although it was very, very funny. In essentials it brought faithfully to mind the habitual intelligence-office article.

Maclyn Arbuckle was formerly a lawyer in Texarkana, Texas, where he was admitted to the bar in March, 1887. He was then not twenty-one years old, and the disability of minority had to be removed by the court before he could be accepted for examination. Judge John M. McLean was on the bench at the time, and Judge Shepard, afterward a member of Congress, was the prosecuting attorney of Bowie County, in which Texarkana is situated. Mr. Arbuckle's examina-

tion being the first of a would-be lawyer in open court in eight years, — other applicants having preferred the star-chamber process, — the event attracted considerable attention. Although quizzed by three of the shrewdest lawyers of the Bowie County bar, the youngster came through with flying colours and was admitted to practise.

Within a week he and another novice were assigned by the court to defend a negro charged with murder, and they succeeded in getting him acquitted, without putting a witness for the defence on the stand, by tearing the State's case to pieces on cross examination. Although this trial gave Arbuckle a reputation, it threw criminal practice in his way almost entirely. There was little money in this, and he was finally forced to give up his office and share a room with a book agent who was selling an edition of Shakespeare. Mr. Arbuckle spent much of his time, and he had plenty of it, com-

mitting to memory Shakespearian verse, afterward spouting it for the entertainment of his friends from a pool-table in a Texarkana billiard hall. Finally he ran for justice of the peace, and was defeated by a grocer. This disgusted Arbuckle with politics, besides injuring what law practice he had.

Consequently, when Peter Baker, the German comedian, heard of Arbuckle's fame as a Shakespearian reader and offered him a position in his company, the discontented lawyer jumped at the chance. He made his first appearance at the Christmas matinée, 1888, in Shreveport, Louisiana, playing a German dialect part, and his début was accounted a failure. Baker, in fact, advised him to hurry back to Texarkana and resume law, but Arbuckle would not do that. He secured an engagement with R. D. McLean and Marie Prescott in very heavy "legitimate," continuing with them for three years. He was brought to a painful realisa-

tion of the fact that a little pudgy nose and a double chin did not fit him for Roman characters by the curt remark of a New York critic in reference to a performance of "Spartacus." This writer declared that Mr. Arbuckle "looked more like an East Side butcher than a Roman." This authoritative opinion drove Mr. Arbuckle into comedy, and he subsequently appeared in several of Charles Frohman's productions and in "The Man from Mexico. He was also with T. Daniel Frawley's stock company in San Francisco, where he acted the title part in "The Senator," Zouroff in "Moths," and Jack Dudley in "The Ensign." During the season of 1900–01, Mr. Arbuckle tried starring, but his play, "The Sprightly Romance of Marsac," dramatised by William Young from Mollie Elliott Seawell's story, and produced in Washington on November 5, 1900, was a failure. Later he was seen as the Earl of Rockingham in "Under Two

Flags," the spectacular melodrama which Paul M. Potter made from Ouida's novel.

In the N. C. Goodwin production of "The Merchant of Venice," which toured the country for twenty-eight performances during the spring of 1901, Mr. Arbuckle played Antonio. This Shakespearian character, notwithstanding its prominence in the drama, is rather an unsatisfactory proposition from the actor's standpoint. Antonio lacks positiveness. He is the pivot around which the action of the play revolves, and the point, too, on which the action is finally focussed. But Antonio himself is passive. He is the model of a temperate man, neither lavishly generous like Bassanio nor miserly stingy like Shylock. He has, however, the unfortunate quality of indifference, and he is afflicted with a strange melancholy, which robs him of any decided interest in life or even in his own ventures. It is this fault of indifference which indirectly brings him

within the Jew's power. Antonio's negative greatness is technically necessary, for were he more active and more vitally human, one's sympathy with him in his suffering would be altogether too painful and exciting.

Mr. Arbuckle's impersonation of Antonio was a sturdy and honest effort, straightforward and genuine, but not especially powerful. His reading of the lines was plain and clear, and generally effective, and in his delivery of the speech emphasising his love for Bassanio he was sincere and moving.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOHN HARE.

Some captious friend is sure to inform me that I have absolutely no excuse for the liberty that I have boldly granted myself of forcing into a volume, which professes to deal with the lives and deeds of American actors, an article on John Hare, the prominent and greatly admired English comedian. As a matter of fact, I know, exactly as well as my captious friend knows, that, in making the elastic phrase, "in America," include Mr. Hare, I am stretching it to an unwarranted and even dangerous tension. Still, there are extenuating circumstances, because of which I am eagerly running the risk of getting my fingers stung, should the straining thread,

JOHN HARE.

with which I have encircled Mr. Hare, suddenly snap. In the first place, these sketches of players form a fairly complete record of the contemporaneous stage in this country; and during the season of 1900–01 Mr. Hare was a prominent figure on the American stage. Furthermore, he was professedly here for the last time, on his farewell visit. Consequently, if I do not seize this occasion to thrust him into a book, I may never have another chance. Moreover, I wanted very much to talk over Arthur Wing Pinero's peculiar play, "The Gay Lord Quex," and I could not do that without inviting Mr. Hare to share in the conversation. Lastly, I am sure that theatregoers in the United States have love enough and admiration enough for John Hare, and curiosity enough regarding him, to read, at least with passing interest, a brief chronicle of his professional achievements.

"The Gay Lord Quex" was first acted at

the Globe Theatre, London, on April 8, 1899, and scored an immediate success. Mr. Hare brought the play to this country and acted it for the first time on this side of the water in New York, on November 12, 1900. Its reception here was scarcely less enthusiastic than in England. Immediately after the London production came the discussion that follows inevitably in the wake of a Pinero play, and an anxious world was informed that "The Gay Lord Quex" was everything under the sun, from a masterpiece of dramatic art to an inconceivably vile specimen of cynical depravity. On one point, however, pros and cons were agreed: they both found the comedy intensely interesting.

This, then, is the plot of "The Gay Lord Quex." A manicure girl, Sophy Fullgarney, who conducts a large business in offices of her own, — a vulgar, sentimental, but entirely honest woman, — is deeply concerned in the fortunes of her foster-sister, a young

lady of high social position. The manicure girl is shocked because an engagement has been made between her foster-sister and the gay Lord Quex, a middle-aged nobleman with a scandalous past. The manicure girl also helps on a serious flirtation between the foster-sister and an impecunious army officer of her own age; and presently, being at the country house with the nobleman, and quite discrediting his professions of reformation, Sophy plays decoy to coax him into improper attentions to herself, in order to open the eyes of her foster-sister. Failing in this scheme, because Lord Quex meets her more pronounced advances with cool contempt, she spies upon the nobleman and one of his former lady-loves, the Duchess of Strood, and finally catches them together in the ex-lady-love's room at a midnight interview, to which Lord Quex has consented only for the purpose of ending the liaison.

To get to this scene — which, in short, is

the backbone of the great third act and of the play as well — there is, it must be confessed, the faintest suspicion that Mr. Pinero has stretched a point. However, nothing hopelessly impossible was introduced, and for what he did present, the playwright had the excuse of an undeniably exciting situation. When Sophy is discovered at the keyhole, the duchess is packed off to a friend's room with the assurance that her reputation, at least, shall be saved. Then Lord Quex, after seeing that all the doors are securely locked, sits down to discuss terms with Sophy. Persuasion will not do; bribery will not do; threats will not do, and Lord Quex then proceeds to measures that are scarcely gentlemanly. He explains to Sophy the exact position which the affair will assume when she rings the bell. He reminds her that Valma, the palmist, to whom she is engaged to be married, is sleeping under the same roof. In short, he puts

the case to her from every point of view that the most unscrupulous blackguardism could suggest to him. It looks, indeed, as if Lord Quex will never recover our respect, when he succeeds finally in inducing the miserable woman to write, at his dictation, a letter compromising herself. Lord Quex takes the letter to use it in his own way; but then comes Sophy's revulsion of feeling.

"Why, it's like selling Muriel," she says. "Just to get myself out of this, I'm simply handing her over to you. I won't do it! I won't! She sha'n't marry you; she sha'n't! I've said she sha'n't, and she sha'n't!"

Upon that she rings the bell. And what does the Lord Quex say to that? He is struck at once by the courage of the girl, — her devotion to Muriel.

"By God! you're a fine-plucked 'un," he exclaims. "I've never known a better. No, my girl, I'm damned if you shall suffer!

Here's your letter. Take it. I won't have it."

The house has been disturbed by the sound of the bell. What is to be done next? Quex is equal to any emergency. He gets Sophy away unseen, his last words being, "Serve me how you please. Miss Fullgarney, upon my soul, I humbly beg your pardon."

In the last act Sophy appears once more in her manicure parlours, having decided not to betray Lord Quex, who has acted so handsomely. All that remains is to sicken the foster-sister of the young officer with whom the manicure girl had been advising her to make a runaway marriage. This is easily accomplished. Lord Quex knows that the young man is made of cheap masculine mettle. "Just tempt him as you tempted me," he says; "the captain is what I was at his age, only worse." So once more the manicure girl plays decoy. The officer promptly takes the bait and is caught with

the girl in his arms by the indignant foster-sister. Of course, this young lady does not run away with the youth, yields gracefully to the family wishes, and marries the elderly nobleman.

"The Gay Lord Quex" was absolutely great as an example of dramatic construction, but as a work of art — using the word art in its highest sense, as characterising an idealistic creation by means of which one man inspires in another emotions and sentiments — as a work of art, "The Gay Lord Quex" had no standing at all. It was no more art than is the magnificent and highly complicated machinery, which drives the ocean greyhound from Liverpool to New York in a few hours over five days.

"The Gay Lord Quex" did not inspire a single emotion. One watched the passing of its action in cold blood. There was not a personage in the play in whom one had even a trace of vital interest. Yet "The Gay Lord

Quex" certainly made an appeal, for it was constantly interesting, and in the third act it was wholly absorbing. Its appeal was to the intellect. It was so masterly done that one could not help admiring it and being carried along by it, even though he realised all the time that he was being gulled by the most patent of artifices.

The play was written around a single situation, out of which was squeezed every atom of dramatic force and every possible shade of comedy. This single situation was led up to by two acts that were largely irrelevant, but which, nevertheless, were so novel, so picturesque, so wonderfully ingenious, that interest in them never failed; and, again, this single incident was closed by means of an act that, under ordinary conditions, would have been absolutely worthless, but which under Mr. Pinero's deft manipulation held the attention to the final curtain.

The result, taken as a whole, was nothing

short of astounding when one considered the comparatively insignificant material with which the playwright laboured. In "The Gay Lord Quex" one experienced a comedy with the unmistakable stamp of cleverness, a comedy of farcical tinge in many of its phases, a comedy full of wit that answered its stage purpose perfectly, a comedy showing forth characters, one of them, Sophy Fullgarney, a strikingly original and forceful conception, and all of them individual and entertaining; and finally a comedy all the accumulated power of which reached its full force in an act of the most biting incisiveness, of the most intense dramatic interest, in an act achieving the acme of emotional contrast, of splendidly utilised suspense, and of effective climactic construction.

Analyse the great third act, if you wish to have revealed the most perfect of trickery in playing upon an audience's susceptibilities. Notice how softly it begins with the Duchess

of Strood and Mrs. Jack Eden; how cautiously the little points are made; how innocently the details of architecture, — the lay of the land, as it were, — the halls and the doors, and especially the situation of Sophy's room, are explained. One gets them all, and then, if he stop to think, wonders how it happens that he knows so much. Notice how emphatically the motive for Quex's attitude toward Sophy is insisted upon, — one is not merely led to suspect that she is listening at the door, nor is he left to the satisfaction of hearing from her own lips that she has been listening; one has it strikingly and dramatically demonstrated before his eyes that she is listening.

Notice the constant backing and filling, the hemming and hawing, the pulling first this way and then that, in the long scene between Quex and Sophy; the various steps by which Quex strengthens his position, until he has the woman at his mercy, con-

quered, reduced to an hysterical pulp; then the master-stroke by means of which in a second the entire situation changes, and it is the woman who is triumphant; finally the ingenious, natural, but unforeseen device which closes the incident. Notice all these things, and then reflect by how much either action or characters have been developed through this breathless episode. Just to this extent, that Sophy has been made to believe that Quex may possibly be a good enough husband for her precious Muriel.

It was impossible not to be impressed and thrilled by this third act, and all this, not because it was a situation naturally strongly dramatic, but because it was a situation made strongly dramatic by the most skilful treatment. The fundamental weakness of this act — and of the whole play, for that matter — was in the strange circumstance that there was not a single character with which one could fully and frankly sympathise. The

consequence was that while the brilliancy and the entertaining elements of Pinero's play were amply apparent, the whole affair was wanting in conviction. It never drew blood. The interest inspired by both Quex and Sophy was supremely artificial. Indeed, left entirely to himself, Quex was impossible, after Mr. Pinero had made so exceedingly plain the colourfulness of his early days. But, for the safety of his play, the dramatist could not leave Quex impossible, and consequently one found Mr. Pinero constantly smoothing out with comforting fingers the wrinkles in Quex's reputation, and finally covering them over entirely with the ready mantle of reform.

It seemed to me that Mr. Pinero was afraid of Quex after he had brought him into being, and endowed him with an evil reputation. He was afraid lest we should be too thoroughly convinced that Quex actually deserved his reputation, and therefore Mr. Pinero kept

concealing Quex's sins with a mantle of charity, which no one was supposed to see, but which was there just the same. Quex's crimes of the past were made vexingly indefinite, — even his liaison with the Duchess of Strood, which had to be insisted upon with some force, never got beyond the stage of mysterious hinting. Quex's reformation was violently dwelt upon, and, greatest touch of all, he was ever shown in striking contrast with the unquestionably depraved Sir Chichester.

The consequence was that, unless one insisted continually to himself that Quex was a very wicked fellow, he found himself regarding the little lord as a pretty fair specimen of the average man after all, an opinion which was exactly what Mr. Pinero meant that one should hold. One saw that Quex was sincere in his love, that he was square, sportsmanlike, chivalrous at the moment of supreme test, and finally that he was almost self-sacri-

ficingly generous. Oh, it was all ingenious, marvellously ingenious, — first on the part of Mr. Pinero, who arranged it all, and secondly on the part of Mr. Hare, who presented Quex without a flaw in the rakish conception, but still with a suggestive, but not insistent, air of innocence.

In the case of Sophy the difficulty was exactly opposite to that encountered with Quex. Sophy had to be pulled out of the sympathetic calcium instead of being pushed into it. Indeed, as it was, she exhibited a most trying persistency in grabbing situations, a persistency which, I can well believe, kept Mr. Pinero wide awake many nights in a vain endeavour to avoid. Sophy was vulgar, it is true, but her heart was in the right place, and this was open sesame to the tender susceptibilities of the theatre. She did several dishonourable things, but she did them with a good purpose. She ought to have been a continuous gleaner of senti-

mental approval, but, somehow or other, she was not. I confess, I do not know just how it happened, but Mr. Pinero did get one to looking at her as actually perverse and small-minded in holding Quex so tightly in the trap into which he had gotten himself.

Altogether, the whole affair was intensely artificial, supremely effective, and marvellously entertaining, and the manner of the man, who found in "The Gay Lord Quex" a drama of purpose, I cannot understand. It was not written to expound anything at all except a certain novel and, in Pinero's hands, strong situation. The question, whether it is ever right to marry a comparatively innocent girl to a man with a past, was not even incidental. In fact, everything about the play, except the wonderful construction that made possible the third act and at the same time kept one continuously interested in three acts most trivial and inconsequential, was merely incidental.

The character drawing, like the construction, was practically flawless, yet there was not a single personage on the stage that won sympathy or excited permanent interest. The heart of the spectator was never touched. The play was full of wit, but it was wholly without humour, and consequently without pathos. The total absence of conviction seemed to me to dispose of any question regarding the influence of the play's undeniable cynicism on the impressionable and weak-minded. I doubt the effect either for good or for bad of a product so essentially superficial and artificial.

One cannot analyse the art of John Hare —it is absurd to try to do so. His Quex was a complete personality, individual, perfect, human. He lived throughout the play in perfect harmony with himself and with his surroundings.

Scarcely less successful as an instance of perfect art, and even more striking, because

more theatrical, was Irene Vanbrugh's Sophy. After watching her impersonation through to the very end, one breathed a prayer of thanks to the actress for not once overdoing a good thing. Imagine a Sophy Fullgarney ever so little off the key, ever so little too highly coloured, ever so little crudely vulgarised! A sorry plight, indeed, and still it would have been so easy to do. Miss Vanbrugh's greatest achievement was in never permitting one to forget that Sophy had a speaking acquaintance with refinement and good taste.

Wholly from a sentimental reason, one almost felt sorry that Miss Vanbrugh, who fairly shared the honours with Mr. Hare, gave such a realistically perfect portrayal of Sophy Fullgarney. These wonderfully vivid and complete impersonations — and Miss Vanbrugh's Sophy was all that — have their drawbacks. In the first place, they are never fully appreciated. Art so fine that it

cannot be detected is art to a certain extent thrown away, for there is no doubt that the average spectator regards as most marvellous the acting that he can see rather than feel. On this fact is based a considerable proportion of the reputation of players with methods akin to those that have made Mrs. Leslie Carter famous.

Work so fine, so subtle, so close to nature, and so impervious to analysis as that displayed both by Miss Vanbrugh and Mr. Hare, is bound to pass unrecognised over the heads of some of us, who forget that it is effect, not an exposition of method, which should be sought for on the stage. Such acting is, indeed, self-sacrificing adherence to the maxim of Shakespeare, who declared — by inference — that the quiet appreciation of a single discerning spectator was worth more than the rude applause, inartistically gained, of a whole theatre of yokels.

By her perfect realisation of Sophy Full-

garney, Miss Vanbrugh's personal reputation suffered from the fact that she could not, by any mental process which I have discovered, for a single instant be separated from the character that she impersonated. She was Sophy Fullgarney, and, to tell the truth, I was sorry for it, for, while Miss Sophy was in some respects a worthy enough young woman, in spite of Mr. Pinero's efforts to cut her out of sympathetic approval, she did not impress one as a wholly desirable acquaintance. Putting aside her inherent vulgarity, which might readily have been forgiven, there was an air of untrustworthiness, of feminine meanness, and of lack of the least notion of personal honour about her, which made her socially impossible even in a thoroughly democratic community.

Now, I could not bring myself to believe that Miss Vanbrugh herself was that way at all, but I must confess, with only Sophy Fullgarney to judge by, I could not conceive

how Miss Vanbrugh could be otherwise. All of which is submitted as highly commendatory to Miss Vanbrugh's art.

With Mr. Hare the matter was on an entirely different basis. We knew positively that he was only playing Quex, the little man with the punctured reputation, for we had seen Mr. Hare as the best and most affable of gentlemen in "A Pair of Spectacles." Moreover, Quex, realistically portrayed as he was, did not once impress one as real with the same insistence that Sophy Fullgarney did.

John Hare, whose real name is John Fairs, is London's oldest actor-manager, his career in that capacity having begun at the Court Square Theatre, Chelsea, on March 13, 1875. He thus antedates Henry Irving by several years. But long before 1875 Mr. Hare had established himself as a London favourite, for ten years before that he made his first professional appearance in the metropolis.

He had been a pupil of Leigh Murray, one of England's greatest light comedians, through whose influence Mr. Hare obtained the part of Short in "Naval Engagements" at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, on the stage of which he was later to make such splendid successes in the long series of Robertson plays. Prior to this Mr. Hare had been in the stock company of another Prince of Wales's Theatre, at Liverpool. Mr. J. L. Toole was starring there in a forgotten piece called "A Man of Business." Mr. Hare's first part was that of a fop. His next, still with Mr. Toole, was that of Lexicon in John Hollingshead's farce, "The Birthplace of Podgers." Then Mr. Hare, having won E. A. Sothern's approval of his performance of the stuttering Jones in "David Garrick," was offered by him a part in "The Woman in Mauve," and though Alexander Henderson, on account of Hare's inexperience, was opposed to the

young actor playing the part, Sothern carried the day, and Mr. Hare scored so heavily that he had hopes of that goal of ambition, London. And this followed in due course, after previous appearances with Mr. — now Sir Squire — Bancroft, all in the year 1864.

On November 11, 1865, Mr. Hare went to London on the salary of two pounds a week, laying the foundation of that great reputation for playing old men when he acted the part of Lord Ptarmigant, in T. W. Robertson's "Society." Thenceforward he appeared in all the Prince of Wales's Theatre productions, first under Mrs. Bancroft (then Marie Wilton) and H. J. Byron, and then Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft. Mr. Hare only played in burlesque once, — Zerlina, in Byron's "Little Don Giovanni." He created Mr. Fluker, in Byron's "A Hundred Thousand Pounds," and Prince Perovsky in "Ours." After "Ours" came Sam Gerridge, in "Caste," in which, as the young plumber, he surprised everybody. In 1896

it will be remembered that he played Eccles in the same play. When the Bancrofts revived "Caste" at the Haymarket in 1883, Mr. Hare lent himself from the St. James's Theatre, which he was managing with Mr. Kendal, to perform his original character of the little Cockney. "How She Loves Him," a forgotten play by Dion Boucicault, followed "Caste" in 1867, and in "Box and Cox," the same evening, Mr. Hare acted Cox to the Box of George Honey and the Mrs. Bouncer of Mrs. Leigh Murray. Early in 1868 came "Play," with Mr. Hare as the Honourable Bruce Fanquehere. Later he appeared as a returned convict in "Tame Cats" by Edmund Yates; as Beau Farintosh, in "School;" Dunscombe Dunscombe, in "M. P." At a matinée the same year, Mr. Hare played Sir Harcourt Courtley, in "London Assurance," in an exceptionally strong cast. In Lord Lytton's "Money," at the Prince of Wales's revival, Mr. Hare was Sir John Vesey, and in

Wilkie Collins's strong drama, "Man and Wife," he was the Sir Patrick Lundie. This brings us to the spring of 1874, when "The School for Scandal" was produced by the Bancrofts, and the part of Sir Peter naturally fell to the creator of Lord Ptarmigant. After this, Mr. Hare left the theatre, to the regret of the management, to start on his own account. As already stated, Mr. Hare opened the Court Theatre on March 13, 1875. His career as an actor-manager has ever been marked by a desire to do his best, both artistically and for the entertainment and amusement of the great theatregoing world of London. Mr. Hare is modesty personified, and disclaims all idea of ever having had any notion of educating the public, though he has always striven to produce good and high-class plays. At the Court Theatre his first managerial experience lasted until 1879, during which time he presented in a noteworthy manner such clever plays as Hamilton Aide's

"A Nine Days' Wonder" and W. S. Gilbert's "Broken Hearts," in which Mr. and Mrs. Kendal and G. W. Anson appeared.

"As a manager," said Mr. Hare, "I think you will observe that I do not hanker after all the best parts. On the contrary, throughout my twenty-five years' management, I have often undertaken characters that many actors would have refused. Indeed, some have done so, and I have undertaken them myself, for the good, I trust and believe, of the cast and the author."

And this is true. Surely the part of Mustapha, in "Broken Hearts," was designed for Mr. Hare, yet he put Anson in it. In 1876, in Charles Coghlan's clever adaptation from the French, "A Quiet Rubber," Mr. Hare as Lord Kilclare achieved one of his greatest triumphs. "A Scrap of Paper," from Sardou's "Les Pattse de Mouche," by J. Palgrave Simpson, was presented in a revised form at the Court, with the Kendals, and Mr.

Hare showed versatility by taking the part of the boy, Archie Hamilton. But later he appeared as the eccentric Doctor Penguin, the entomologist. As the Kendals had to leave to fulfil an engagement at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Ellen Terry was speedily engaged to act in "Brothers," which was not a success; so "New Men and Old Acres," by Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg, was revived and drew the town for many months, with Ellen Terry as the charming heroine and Mr. Hare as Vavasour. This ran until October, 1877, when a posthumous play by Lord Lytton was produced, called "The House of Darnley." It secured attention and the whole performance was highly praised. In this, Mr. Hare acted a very small part, that of Mainwaring. "Victims," by Tom Taylor, did not succeed, and then came that most delightful work, the late W. G. Wills's version of "The Vicar of Wakefield." It was Mr. Hare who suggested the work of Goldsmith to Wills,

and practically Mr. Hare was part constructor.

In 1879 Mr. Hare joined his fortunes with the Kendals and assumed the joint management of the St. James's Theatre, previously considered an unlucky house. Among the most noteworthy productions of this period were "The Falcon," by the poet laureate, Alfred Tennyson; "The Money Spinner," "The Squire," and "The Ironmaster." In 1889 Mr. Hare became the manager of the Garrick. There one of his greatest successes was "A Pair of Spectacles," in which he subsequently won so much favour in the United States. Another splendid and remunerative achievement was a revival of "Diplomacy."

Mr. Hare has visited this country twice, — for the first time during the season of 1895–96, when the leading feature of his repertory was Pinero's startling, but on the whole unsuccessful, drama, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

CHAPTER XV.

WILLIAM H. CRANE.

THE season of 1899–1900 was an unfortunate one for William H. Crane, and it was only through his great personal popularity that he was able to tide over without absolute disaster a series of mishaps that would otherwise have seriously embarrassed him. He began the season ambitiously with the production at Providence, Rhode Island, on September 25, 1899, of a play by Bronson Howard and Brander Matthews, called, "Peter Stuyvesant." It proved to be a tiresome affair, commonplace in story and monotonous in treatment. It was constructed around the single figure of the sturdy, valiant, bad-tempered but warm-hearted Peter Stuyvesant,

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WILLIAM H. CRANE

As David Harum in "David Harum."

governor under the Dutch régime of that locality which is now New York. The object of the play was to show this testy autocrat in his historical environment, and to portray his sharply contrasted moods. These things were well enough done during part of the first act. Unfortunately, the other three acts were merely repetitions. Mr. Crane was praised generously for his impersonation of the name part. His vigour and buoyancy were abundant, but he could not sufficiently conceal the modern man in his acting to prevent his Stuyvesant from conveying an impression of anachronism. Harking back to a seventeenth-century Dutchman, after years of bustling, hustling, middle-aged American citizens, proved too great a strain on Mr. Crane's mimetic powers.

After trying vainly to force "Peter Stuyvesant" on a public that would have nothing to do with it, Mr. Crane had recourse to a farce, made over from the German by Mi-

chael Morton, and called, "A Rich Man's Son." This was brought out in New York on October 31, 1899. The rich man's son in this case was a chap full of fads and fancies, a poser with ideals, who, never having known poverty, despised mightily his father's cold cash. To cure him of this alarming mental condition, the father pretended to be the victim of unfortunate speculations and retired to disreputable lodgings, taking the family, including the son, with him. This realistic initiation into the value of the mighty dollar soon bred in the erring son a proper respect for the advantages of wealth. Such was the plot of "A Rich Man's Son," which as an emergency filler was permissible, but which as a standby for an entire season was hardly up to the requirements. In brief, it was old-fashioned, clumsy, and wholly lacking in distinction and finish. Even with these drawbacks, it might have made a fair impression if it had been acted with a vim and

incisiveness so essential to this style of entertainment. But Mr. Crane's company had apparently been trained for better things, and it made a mess of the little merit there was in the vehicle.

In this company, however, there was a young woman, short in stature, with a pretty face, yellowish hair, and a name not easy to master but hard to forget, — Sandol Milliken. She played what in England would be called a slavey part. That is to say, Miss Milliken changed her own prepossessing self into a dirty-faced, slatternly dressed tenement waif, a conventional enough character, though it did not seem such amid the dreariness of "A Rich Man's Son." She enriched her sketch — for it was only a sketch, such a one as Michael Wolff might have drawn — with delicate detail, natural humour, tender sympathy, and artistic sincerity. There were few honours for any one in "A Rich Man's Son," and it did seem a bit ungenerous for

this comparatively obscure actress to seize them all.

The gentle art of farcing consists to a considerable degree in putting flesh and blood characters in hopelessly absurd situations, and then standing off and seeing what will happen. Mr. Morton assuredly had the hopelessly absurd situations. He knew that they were good ones, for he had seen them worked on the stage time and time again. But when it came to the flesh and blood characters, he stumbled, and in trying to stand off for the purpose of seeing what would happen, he fell down completely. In other words, Mr. Morton's situations, though old, would have done well enough, had they been dexterously handled by a facile writer of farce. But Mr. Morton had very little finesse, and no idea at all of subtilty or suggestion. He encumbered his action with reiterated explanations, and killed one's interest by constantly coddling one's compre-

hension. As Peter Dibdin, the notoriously wealthy father, Mr. Crane was the same Mr. Crane that he always has been in characters of the blustering, fussy type, — authoritative in his own blunt way, a comedian by the force of personality, sometimes almost by main strength.

Fortune did finally deign to smile on Mr. Crane, however, when the opportunity came for him to transfer to the stage that famous citizen of New York State, David Harum. The dramatisation of Edward Noyes Westcott's novel was something of a syndicate affair. The first version was by R. and M. W. Hitchcock, and this was first acted in Rochester, New York, on April 9, 1900. Before the piece reached New York the following October, it had fallen into the ever open hands of Edward E. Rose, who moulded it into a closer resemblance to a play. Even at that, "David Harum" was by no means a marvel of dramatic architecture. but it

served its purpose as a setting for Mr. Crane's admirable impersonation. Mr. Crane's portrayal of the horse-trading financier and homely philosopher was a lifelike and satisfying embodiment of the idea of Harum that one got from Mr. Westcott's book. Exactly the man in outward aspect, Mr. Crane's acting carried the similitude much farther. It was impossible to find missing a tone, a gesture, a hint of mischievous fun or a gleam of sound sense. Regarding "David Harum" as a play, Edward A. Dithmar wrote:

"A play which enables an actor to make such a triumph must contain merit of an uncommon sort. Good actors are encountering disaster every day because of bad plays. This dramatisation of 'David Harum' is, indeed, rather naïf, and, in one episode, a clumsy piece of work, but the stage treatment of that never-to-be-forgotten transaction in horseflesh with Deacon Perry is cleverly managed, while the famous revelation on Christmas Day of

David's long-standing debt to the widow of 'Billy P.,' and his theatrical payment of it, are brought about rather more ingeniously and naturally than in the book.

"The dramatisation has the sound merit of preserving, in an intelligent theatrical form, every detail of the book relating to David that could be made use of in a play. As for the rest of the story, the twisting and perversion it has been subjected to do not matter. The transformation of Mary Blake into a quixotic young amazon and the chief opponent of David, the antagonist, in short, in certain scenes, is unfortunate only because the part is acted by gentle Katherine Florence, whose style of beauty, voice, and clothes do not seem to fit it. This endangers the interest of the piece, however, only in one violent scene of cross purposes, which in both its essence and superficial details is unlike anything in real life.

"Otherwise the current flows smoothly,

even in those few passages when delightful David is not in sight and hearing. The sale of the bay horse to the deacon is the principal incident of Act I., while the last act, not counting the development of the slight amatory interest, is occupied with the settlement of the affairs of Widow Cullom. The intermediate act exhibits David, like another Mr. Boffin, making a bad name for himself so that truth and Cupid may ultimately triumph. All of his famous aphorisms are put to good use, and they all hit the mark. One laughs immoderately sometimes, and in one passage susceptible persons will find their eyes filling with tears. No better praise than this could be given to a popular stage-piece."

HENRY MILLER

As Sidney Carton in "The Only Way."

CHAPTER XVI.

HENRY MILLER IN MELODRAMA.

THE diversity of opinion regarding Henry Miller's rank as an actor is most curious. Although his standing in the East is excellent, in that section of the country he has never gained the personal regard — if I may express it thus indefinitely — which has been so freely showered on other players, mayhap of inferior talent. He is not what is known as "strong" with the public. In the West, and especially in San Francisco, where for several summers Mr. Miller played stock engagements, he is ranked as second, probably, to none of the younger generation of players. It must be acknowledged, too, that San Francisco has had a far better oppor-

tunity to judge Mr. Miller's capabilities than has the East. Here he is known almost exclusively by his work in "Liberty Hall," "Sowing the Wind," "Heartease," "The Only Way," and "Richard Savage." There he has appeared in a wide range of impersonations, including all the recent London successes, such plays as "Lord and Lady Algy," and "Brother Officers," and even the classics, among them "Hamlet."

What has prevented Mr. Miller's solid establishment, it seems to me, has been his inability up to date to secure a strong, compelling play, combined with a certain lack of personal magnetism that has kept him from forcing to success a play of inferior merit. He has always had interesting plays, and plays worthy of consideration, but he has never yet been fortunate enough to secure one of those dramas that sweep irresistibly everything before them. "The Only Way" was in many respects a fine melodrama, but

it lacked that quality of conviction which would have made it an overwhelming success. "Richard Savage" was a better play than "The Only Way." Its literary quality was thoroughly good and incomparably superior to that of the average commercially successful romantic drama. Yet "Richard Savage" also lacked compelling force.

It is the monotonous task of the chronicler of stage history to record that such and such a play had its original production in London at such and such a date, for the American stage for many seasons back has been firmly attached to the London theatrical band-wagon, a somewhat fortunate circumstance, it must be acknowledged, inasmuch as all the plays really worth seeing — with one or two exceptions — have been importations. Such was "The Only Way," which Freeman Wills dramatised from Charles Dickens's novel, "A Tale of Two Cities." Before Henry Miller acted it in the United States, this melodrama

of the French Revolution had served firmly to establish Martin Harvey as a London theatrical manager. He brought out the play at Sir Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre, London, on February 16, 1899. Mr. Miller first appeared in the drama at the Herald Square Theatre, New York, on September 16, 1899.

The leading idea of "A Tale of Two Cities" provided about as fine a theme for dramatic exposition as could fall to the lot of any playwright to handle. A man whose life had been, from a worldly point of view, a complete failure, who was conscious, moreover, of lost opportunities and moral worthlessness, was moved by his great love for a woman, to sacrifice his life in order to ensure her happiness. She loved and was loved in turn by a rival, who strangely resembled the dissolute hero, and him the hero successfully impersonated, perishing by the guillotine, assuring himself by this supreme deed, that

his life had not been in vain, his last words being, "It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

Although Henry Miller starred in "The Only Way," "The Only Way" was by no means a star play. It had too many strong characters to make it possible for one actor consistently to focus all the attention on himself. In the matter of diversified interest, "The Only Way" differed widely from the ordinary romantic drama. Usually one has but a single hero to bother about; in "The Only Way," however, there were two, — Carton and Darnay, — and, of course, each hero had his own heroine. The fact that "The Only Way" was derived from a novel as widely read as "A Tale of Two Cities" also brought responsibilities to every actor. There could be no slighted parts. Each character — however unimportant its place in the play — had to be truthfully and artis-

tically portrayed. The spectator knew each and every one of them as old friends, and he demanded that old friends should be respectfully treated.

What "The Only Way" required, to be thoroughly effective, was a company of stars. It was not enough that Carton should have been able at certain points to command the centre of the stage. There were many moments when the exigencies of composite effect required that Carton should be forced to the background, that he should be driven out of sight, the dramatic interest for the time being captured by another person. Unfortunately this did not happen in the presentation of the play that I saw. The company was weak, and consequently Mr. Wills's play, which, after all, was melodrama only a trifle better than the average, suffered greatly in effect. Possibly, acted up to the limit of effect, the play might have approached tragedy in its appeal. Without doubt the idealistic self-sacrifice of

Sydney Carton should have been sweepingly pathetic. Comprehending fully that noble spirit, the spectator would have been uplifted; his faith in humanity would have been strengthened, and dramatic art would have been enriched with an inspiring creation. Mr. Miller's presentation of the character tended toward that ideal. His first impression was very strong, and his playing of the difficult intoxication scene vivid and yet subtle. There was danger of mawkishness and sentimentality, but the actor escaped it. He suggested strongly the sweetness and tenderness of Carton's nature, and also his humour and grim fatalism. As the play progressed, Mr. Miller frequently reached the heart, and during the final scenes, one felt continually the impress on his imagination. What was needed to complete the personation, to give it full scope, to render it thoroughly effective, was environment, — atmosphere, as James A. Herne called it. This atmosphere could only

have been supplied by a cast great throughout.

In the important particular of retelling the plot of "A Tale of Two Cities," Mr. Wills did very well indeed. He built up a straightforward melodrama of the refined type. So carefully did he tune his action that, in conditions slightly more strenuous, brought about by acting a trifle less commonplace, his melodrama would, perhaps, have acquired tragic dignity. However, it was not tragedy as it stood. Carton's self-sacrifice was only theatrically pathetic. It did not create in one a tear-compelling grief. The exact reason for this was difficult to state. It might have been because of a defect in the construction of the play. It might have been that Mr. Miller lacked somewhat in imaginative idealism and suggestiveness. It might have been to a certain extent due to the crudity of the ensemble of the final scene, with its mob that howled spasmodically in an illu-

sion destroying monotone, and its French nobles whose aristocracy was scarcely for an instant in evidence.

Mr. Wills began his play with a prologue in which was set forth the events that led to Doctor Manette's long imprisonment in the Bastile. In the first act we made the acquaintance of the dissolute Sydney Carton, of Stryver, Defarge, — a combination of Dicken's Defarge and the relentless Madame Defarge, — Darnay, and Mime, an interpolated character founded on the little seamstress, who went to the guillotine with Carton, and introduced by Mr. Wills for the sole purpose of hopelessly loving Carton. In this act the incident of the famous trial of Darnay in the English court, on the charge of treason, was related; Darnay's strange resemblance to Carton was explained, and Gabelle's letter, which led finally to the return to France of Darnay and his arrest as the Marquis de St. Evremonde, came into view.

In the next act we met Mr. Lorry and were witnesses of the betrothal of Lucie Manette and Darnay. The act closed with Darnay's secret departure for France. Between Acts II. and III. there was a serious break. At the opening of the third act, without any especial reason therefor, we found ourselves before the revolutionary tribunal. Through the pleading of Carton, Darnay was at first acquitted, only to be rearrested after Defarge's denunciation and finally condemned to death. The last act showed how Carton succeeded in taking Darnay's place as a condemned prisoner, and the curtain fell on a tableau, picturing Carton just before the moment of execution.

The prologue was, as it should have been, a little play by itself, — one of considerable effectiveness, too. The drama proper started slowly, and was not fully under way till well toward the end of the second act. The tribunal scene was finely

conceived, and was unusually strong in the quality of effectively contrasted emotion, and the combining of the acquittal and subsequent condemnation of Darnay into a single episode was of the greatest theatrical value.

"Richard Savage" appealed so strongly to the intellect that one was constantly wondering why it did not touch the emotions as well. The spectator got positive mental enjoyment from the passing of the action, but the emotional thrill that is the final dramatic test was only here and there in evidence. There was but one cause for such a result, and to find it one had to revert to the dramatist. I do not believe that Madeline Lucette Ryley herself felt Richard Savage as a reality. I think that he appealed to her, not as a human being, but as a dramatic possibility; and I am of the opinion that she wrote her play, not so much with the idea of portraying Richard Savage as a man, as of providing a many-sided instru-

ment on which an actor might display his virtuosity. The result was a study of character that interested one while it did not convince one. Indeed, so much was one interested that he felt personally responsible for not having been convinced, and he tried to fix the blame for this, not on the play, but on himself.

In all the surface qualities the drama was admirable. The eighteenth century atmosphere was splendidly maintained; the character drawing throughout was versatile without being eccentric; the action was constant, but without melodramatic rush, and the climaxes, all of them, had the valuable theatrical quality of the slightly unexpected. A wholly unexpected climax is usually — nay, almost invariably — weak, but a climax that has been carefully worked up, and that slips off into an unperceived channel is always highly effective. Mrs. Ryley's comedy had both humour and dramatic strength. The dinner scene in

the third act, for example, was remarkable, constantly flashing with wit, and sparkling ever, yet having always in evidence tension and foreboding. One felt that all this laughing and joking was on the brink of a rumbling volcano momentarily threatening eruption; and when eruption did come, the spectator was ready to be moved by it.

"Richard Savage" was a difficult play to classify. Were it not for its historically unavoidable tragic ending, it would have come readily under the head of comedy; but, as was the case with Clyde Fitch's "Nathan Hale" and "Barbara Frietchie," the somewhat illogical death debarred the comedy idea. Still, in spite of their endings, none of these dramas was by any means serious enough to be termed tragedy. The final death was, in each case, merely incidental to the action; it was in no sense an essential, a necessary atonement for sin, an inexorable decree penned by fate. Therefore,

the only thing left was to term "Richard Savage" a melodrama, which one did, however, with reservations. Melodrama, in the ordinary acceptance, means theatricalism. "Richard Savage" was more than a merely theatrical play. It was a study of character as well.

Just how much historical basis Mrs. Ryley had for the view that she took of Richard Savage's character might be an interesting subject for discussion, but such a discussion could have no bearing whatever on the value of the play that Mrs. Ryley wrote with Richard Savage as the subject. She portrayed a hero, and whether he was "Dick" Savage to our minds was not the point. The nub of the matter lay here: Was he an effective dramatic character? Was he plainly delineated? Was he logically developed? Did he act well? Had he the breath of life? Was he convincing? Did he arouse sympathetic interest?

Mrs. Ryley declared as beyond dispute the truth of Savage's claim that he was the illegitimate son of Mrs. Brett, formerly Countess of Macclesfield, and Savage's whole effort in the play was bent toward gaining public recognition of this claim. Mrs. Brett was steadfastly opposed to him, and brought to bear to circumvent him every possible influence. His poems found no publishers; his plays were refused at the theatres; the one man who could establish his birthright was incarcerated in a madhouse. Finally, Savage, beaten down to the last ditch, broken in health, poverty-stricken, was wrongfully accused of murder, taken to Newgate Prison, where he died just as a pardon reached him.

Mrs. Ryley's conception of Richard Savage was sympathetically effective and dramatically strong in theory rather than in fact. It was not, however, strikingly original. Poor but proud was the popular key-note, dissolute to a mild degree, high-spirited to the bitter end,

chivalrous except where his mother was concerned, loving the maid of his choice with idealism and with supreme devotion, generous even to the giving away of his last crust, witty, keen, a daredevil for bravery and smiler in the face of death. With such a character the inevitable death scene might be considered as not wholly without justification, were one disposed to set aside involuntary irritation at what on the surface seemed to be the wanton cutting off of a good and deserving fellow, and willing to seek a reason in the subtler regions beneath the surface. Savage died in triumph. His enemies had all been conquered. Even his mother had come to terms, and tacitly, at least, surrendered. His love was sweet and fresh and pure.

Suppose Richard Savage had lived. What then? He was a good fellow. Yes. But his habits were loose. He had a beastly temper. He was proud to perverseness.

Finally, his lady-love was a dear girl, but she was nothing more than that. Ann Oldfield would have been a far better mate for him, and she would have known how to have managed him. No, Savage was not a man to keep to the straight and narrow path; he was too impatient of restraint. He would have married his Elizabeth, and they would have been happy for a time. At length, however, her unmitigated sweetness would have cloyed his appetite, and he would have broken away from her, made her miserable, and wrecked absolutely a conventional life. Viewing the case in this light, Mrs. Ryley was kind to kill poor Dick. She probably saved some one a lot of trouble.

I found the play interesting always, — picturesque in the garret scene of the first act, though the exposition of the plot seemed both clumsy and blind; tinged with pathos, though not absolutely convincing, in the second act, which showed the first interview

between mother and son; strongly dramatic, thrilling, and even absorbing, in the third and fourth acts, — the sparkle of wit in the dinner scene of the third act, and the brilliant and unlooked-for climax of the fourth act being notably excellent points. The pathos of the death scene of the last act did not hold me as it should have, though it was well imagined.

Mr. Miller realised Richard Savage, particularly the comedy side of the character with its occasional glimpses of pathos, with satisfying completeness. The dinner scene was played with especial force and brilliancy, and there was one moment in the fourth act — the scene between Savage and Elizabeth Wilbur, in which he refused to allow her to share his poverty — when Mr. Miller was distinctly great.

JOHN BLAIR.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN BLAIR AND THE INDEPENDENT THEATRE.

An interesting feature of the theatrical season of 1899–1900 was the presentation in several Eastern cities of a series of plays of certain literary value, but plays which, from their originality or unconventionality, were manifestly "unpopular," and, therefore, never likely to be considered by the commercial theatre manager. I am not blaming the theatre manager for his conservatism. From his view-point he is absolutely right. As he would proudly tell you, if you should ask him, he is not in the business for his health. When a man talks that way, there is no use in wasting time arguing with him about

art. However, the movement started by John Blair, and completed by two or three other devoted and optimistic souls, was none the less grateful and scarcely the less important because it did not stir very deeply the helter-skelter theatregoing public. Five dramas were produced, — some of them worth while, others not worth while, but all of them providing material for disputation. Every play acted did at least suggest an idea above the mere wooing of dollars. They were honest efforts, and an honest effort, even though it prove a bore, is immeasurably more comforting to one's self-respect than a dishonest effort, which nine times out of ten is a bore also.

The dramas produced in this course of modern plays covered a wide field. They were "El Gran Galeoto," from the Spanish of José Eschegaray; "Les Tenailles," in the English version called "Ties," from the French of Paul Hervieu; Henrik Ibsen's

"The Master Builder;" "The Storm," from the Russian of Alexander Ostrovsky; and "The Heather Field," by Edward Martyn. It was notable, as showing the impression that it is possible for actors to make when they are provided with material that is actable, that two players were greatly advanced professionally through this course of plays, — Mr. Blair, the originator of the course, and Miss Florence Kahn, a wholly unknown actress, who came immediately into the public view with force and vividness.

John Blair was born in New York, and studied acting with Franklin Sargent, making his first public appearance at the Berkeley Lyceum, New York, on December 8, 1893, in a student production of "Left at the Post." One of his earliest professional appearances was in the New York production of "The City of Pleasure," at the Empire Theatre, on September 2, 1895. During the season of 1896–97 he was with Olga Neth-

ersole in "Carmen" and "The Wife of Scarlii." The following season he appeared in the productions of "El Gran Galeoto" and "John Gabriel Borkman," by the Criterion Independent Theatre at Madison Square Theatre, New York, and later he supported Madame Janauschek in "What Dreams May Come," acting Roger Hazleton. During the season of 1898–99 he was with Julia Marlowe in "Colinette," and he also acted Orlando to Miss Marlowe's Rosalind in "As You Like It." In the spring of 1899 he gave a special performance of Ibsen's "Ghosts" at the Carnegie Lyceum in New York, and the following fall came the series of modern plays. Mr. Blair supported Grace George in "The Countess Chiffon," early in 1900, and shortly after that appeared as Vinicius in "Quo Vadis," at the Herald Square Theatre, New York.

The English version of "El Gran Galeoto" was made by Maude Banks. Eschegaray's

drama belonged distinctively to what is known as the modern school, and in a general classification would be placed in the same category with the works of Ibsen, Sudermann, and Hauptmann. The distinguishable features of this school are quiet action, deep-searching psychology, and uncompromising logic. The decree of fate is written down to the last bitter period, and the hand of Nemesis is never stayed by false platitudes nor misconceived sentimentality. This unvarying attitude of steadfast adherence to truth and reality has brought upon the modern drama the charge of pessimism. It is claimed that the bright and joyous things of life are neglected for those that are sordid and low and disconcerting; that the tragedy of life is emphasised, that the dull monotone of existence alone is painted, and light and sunshine are excluded from the picture. This charge of pessimism is to a degree unanswerable. The modern drama, in its desire to get

as far away as possible from the conventions that are second nature to the stage in general, has persistently presented man face to face with conditions which he himself may have caused, but which he is powerless to alleviate. Man impotent is the tragedy of human existence, a tragedy which reaches home to every heart with the tremendous force of actual experience. This ceaseless struggle of the race in general toward an indefinite something, a struggle charged with deepest pathos, the modern drama has taken for its theme, and from it has drawn its conclusions. These conclusions may be pessimistic, but life itself, when moulded by passion, avarice, and personal selfishness, is pessimistic.

The force of the modern drama comes from its fidelity to life, — its realism, if you please, — and its absolute sincerity. Its characters are not heroic figures nor dastardly villains; they are simply men and women,

more often than not well meaning, whose disastrous transgressions are blunders of judgment, mistakes caused by ignorance or prejudice, rather than the evil doings of deliberate purpose. This state of affairs was excellently illustrated in "El Gran Galeoto." There was not a personage in the drama whose purposes could in any way be construed as intentionally mischievous. On the other hand, Don Severo and his wife Mercedes, the provokers of all the trouble, were actuated by the highest motives. They wished to save Don Severo's brother Julian from disgrace, his wife Christina from a scandal, and the family from dishonour. Their mistake was one of judgment, for their suspicious natures found sin where no sin existed. They got it into their heads that Ernest, the poet, dreamer, and philosopher, whom Don Julian had taken into his family, and whom he regarded as his son, was the lover of Christina, Julian's youthful wife.

They could not understand the pure-minded and perfectly apparent affection that the man and woman held for one another. So they told their suspicions to Don Julian. He scoffed at them, but the poison, insidious and deadly, struck home. He, too, became distrustful, and his vision was perverted. The end of it all? Simple enough. The man and the woman, both suffering under a common sense of injustice, were finally actually driven into one another's arms, and the love, which at first was an imagination, in the end became a reality.

As a play, "El Gran Galeoto" was beautifully put together. It moved forward with absolute precision. There were no side-lights to detract one's attention from the main theme, no extraneous effects for the sake of colour or movement or contrast. The action started with the rise of the curtain, advanced steadily and naturally to a climax at the end of the second act, and the catastrophe fol-

lowed logically and inevitably. The dramatic interest, on the contrary, increased in intensity and power up to the very end, and Ernest's speech of manly and courageous defiance of public opinion, which preceded the final curtain, thrilled and throbbed with the keenest and most searching emotion. Indeed, the culminating power of the last act was tremendous.

The interpretation of the drama was eminently satisfactory and of remarkable evenness. There was evident in every character the utmost sincerity, and there was no playing to the gallery. Mr. Blair's Ernest was a well-defined creation, finely idealised, and competently resourceful. The actor was strongly dramatic, and his range of expression wide and varied. He was especially successful in reproducing the imaginative atmosphere that was so necessary to a proper understanding of the character of Ernest. In the climax of the last act Mr.

Blair completely annihilated self, and one forgot the actor entirely in the overwhelming force of the dramatic situation.

The English version of "Les Tenailles" was made by George Peabody Eustis and Paul Kester. "Ties" proved to be a problem play of the most argumentative kind. It was drama of very few moments of action, violent or otherwise, but the appeal to the emotions was at all times keen and intense. "Ties" represented the conflict between a husband and his wife. The husband in the eyes of the world was a model citizen. He conducted himself properly in every respect. He lived moderately, and, aside from an unpleasant disposition to assert his rights on every possible occasion, he was a good neighbour. He was, however, absolutely lacking in one important essential, — sympathy. His fault was not so much selfishness, although he did methodically fix his daily routine to suit himself; neither was his fault a lack of

respect for his wife. A woman can forget selfishness if it be concealed by deference and kindness; she can even forgive a man for not loving her if he fail to love her in a spirit of consideration and regret. Robert Fergan's wreck of happiness was wholly due to his thoroughly unsympathetic nature; he had no milk of human kindness, and he was unsusceptible to the touch of sentiment. The hard indifference, which absence of sentiment engenders in a man, no woman can endure. She will rebel against it as long as she remains a woman.

Fergan had married because it was a social convention, and to his small, narrow mind the fact that the world at large and that his friends at home approved of what he was doing was reason enough why he should enter the marriage state. The woman in the case was of little account. She would love him, — that was her duty; she would make his home happy, — that, too, was her duty; she would

be subservient, — again, it was her duty. On his own duty to her he thought nothing beyond the mere external of keeping himself physically undefiled.

That was the condition presented in "Ties." It was a sane enough problem, and the events of the play were common enough property. We in this country might have developed a different action from the premises, for the sneaking lover is an unsympathetic personage in our eyes. But the wreck of the home, the despair of the wife, the growing severity of the husband until he became positively unbearable, would have been the same. In "Ties," Irene, the wife, knowing her love for the outsider, pleads that her husband permit her to be divorced. He refuses, not because such a course would mean disgrace to the woman, but because it would discommode his plans. So the unwilling wife seeks her lover clandestinely. A child is born, whom Fergan believes to be his own,

and for ten years he lives in ignorance of the dishonour that has fallen on his household. In the meantime the lover has died, and the woman has fixed all the passion of her nature on an adoring affection for her son. The final conflict comes when Fergan, still pursuing his pigheaded stubbornness, and standing as immovably on his rights as a father as ten years before he stood on his rights as a husband, declares that the boy shall be separated from his mother and be sent to school. The woman, in an agony of apprehension and as a last resort, reveals the truth of the child's parentage. Fergan's rage is terrible, and fear of consequences alone keeps him from killing his wife. But he will divorce her; he will drive her from his house; he will pile disgrace upon her and upon her offspring. Now is the wife's chance for revenge. She refuses to be divorced, and the husband has no evidence that will stand before the law. At last, there dawns on him a

glimmering of the great wrong that he has committed. There is nothing for him to do but accept the inevitable, to keep the woman whom he had once refused to let leave him, and to give a name to the child that is not his own.

As between play and play "Ties" was not to be compared with "El Gran Galeoto." The Spanish drama illustrated, under modern conditions, the sweeping, irresistible force of fate. The French play, on the other hand, lacked the underground current of blind "must." The conditions were adroit enough not to seem palpably artificial, but, nevertheless, the mind constantly recognised that the characters were being held to their environment by the strong will of the dramatist. In "El Gran Galeoto" one saw the personages of the play helpless under the insidious poison of slander. He saw the husband fighting desperately but hopelessly against a growing suspicion of his wife's faithlessness. He saw

the wife torn in spite of herself from her husband's arms and thrown into those of her lover. He saw the lover himself battling against dishonouring the man who had been a father to him. Under the conditions so powerfully represented by the dramatist, one could not for the life of him imagine how matters could have turned out differently than they did.

But this conviction did come in "Ties." The spectator, while he recognised Robert Fergan's essential fidelity to human nature, rebelled instinctively against his exaggerated perverseness and stupidity. He was continually out of sympathy with the wife, because she kept her place in the household of so thoroughly disagreeable a man. He would have been only too glad to have commended her for running away with her lover. Finally, he had no patience at all with the lover, who had not backbone enough to cut the knot, either by killing the husband or by clearing

out with the woman. Of course, any one of those possibilities would have put an end to the problem that was vital to Mr. Hervieu's play, but the mere fact that each one of them was a possibility showed conclusively that the drama, with all its striking stagecraft, sweeping emotion, and fine character drawing, lacked convincing power.

Mr. Blair had a far better opportunity to display his strength as the husband in "Ties" than he did in the negative character of the poetic lover in "El Gran Galeoto." He developed the character of Fergan perfectly, taking it from the mass of generalisations, amid which the dramatist had imagined it, and establishing it as an individual. His cold-blooded reserve was magnificent, and the two great moments of sweeping rage were made exceedingly effective, Mr. Blair picturing the passion of a man, not the wild, meaningless ranting of a traditional puppet.

It was a regrettable fact that after the presentation of "Ties," Mr. Blair's connection with the course of plays ceased, internal dissensions arising, — a misfortune that seems common to all movements that aim to spell art with capitals, — which caused him to withdraw from the enterprise. In the cast of Ibsen's "The Master Builder," therefore, the only one that remained of the original company was Miss Kahn. It required no very great discernment to see that the performances of this play were unsuccessful as far as the public at large was concerned. There were two prominent causes for this. One was that the complex, symbolic, and argumentative drama is actable only under exceptional circumstances, and the other was that these exceptional circumstances were not present at the performances under consideration. The thought of the spectator was not guided by actors who were interpreters. Miss Kahn did display this illuminating force. No one

failed to comprehend her meaning, and when at the very end of the drama, she thrilled one with her shouts of triumph as the Master Builder climbed upward, seeming under her inspiration about to accomplish again the impossible, about to realise again her ideal in all its completeness, — at this supreme moment a flood of light was thrown into the dark corners of Ibsen's conception.

With the average quality of its acting, however, the drama proved far too subtle for the casual audience, only superficially acquainted with the philosophy and method of the Norwegian dramatist. Those that previously knew nothing about "The Master Builder," or about Ibsen, either, except that somebody or other declared that he was a genius, — found the drama veritable nonsense. Giving "The Master Builder" in this country without a preliminary course in the Ibsen drama, was not unlike plunging a child, who had just learned his A, B, Cs, into

the midst of the Greek alphabet. An understanding of Ibsen is not to be secured in two hours or from a single play, certainly not from such a play as "The Master Builder," which comprehends so much as to be almost incomprehensible.

Yet Ibsen is not a fool, and he is not crazy. One would not choose him as a genial companion, perhaps, for he has a keen scent for the social cesspool; and after locating it, instead of killing the foul odour with disinfectants, as a good citizen probably would do, he uncovers the noisomeness and spreads it before the horrified nostrils of mankind. No, he is not a genial companion, but he usually has something to say, and he is never afraid to say it. Moreover, he is more likely than not to have the truth on his side. There is tragic power in this Halvard Solness, the Master Builder, who, after fighting his way to worldly success, ruthlessly crushing everybody and everything that crossed his path,

at last finds himself face to face with the same fate he has so remorselessly dealt to others, finds himself in his turn blocking the path of youth and in danger of being overwhelmed by some one stronger than himself. Standing alone and in despair, for his ambition has devoured every kindly impulse and killed every affection, he seizes as a last hope the very force that is to be his undoing. He will feed on the youthful vigour and mounting enthusiasm of Hilda Wangel. But it is too late. Youth is too bountiful for old age, and in one final effort to attain youth's ideal, the wretched, frightened hypocrite perishes. Is there not a life tragedy here?

Ostrovsky' stragedy, "The Storm," — or, more correctly, "The Thunderstorm," — although thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of crushed and despairing Russia, and strikingly dependent for its dramatic effects on that peculiar element of unquestioning submission to authority, which is so much a

part of the Russian character and which is the real cause of Russian despotism, nevertheless, proved less incomprehensible to an English-speaking audience than one would naturally have expected. The strange atmosphere of the play did at times bear heavily on one's sense of the ridiculous, but there was also in evidence much universal human nature — half-concealed, perhaps, but still potently sympathetic — in the dramatist's character drawing. Then, too, there was a wealth of imagination and of suggestion throughout the action. Katia, the erring wife, was fantastically, yet truthfully, conceived. The tragic note was sounded with unhesitating force, and the calm brutality, which made possible the sad fate which befell Katia, was placed before one so quietly, yet so unmistakably, that there was no escaping the conviction that sincerity pervaded the drama.

Edward Martyn's Irish drama, "The

Heather Field," made a deep impression. It was a play without the slightest trace of theatrical buncombe, of quiet, realistic action, and with many moments of thrilling dramatic power. Its dialogue was almost always shrewd and pointed, sometimes genuinely poetic; and its psychological problem — the effect of a harsh, unsympathetic, and materialistic temperament on a nature exquisitely idealistic and imaginative, keenly sensitive to beauty — was of the greatest interest. The most notable feature of "The Heather Field," however, was its unusually fine character drawing. There was considerable talk about the symbolism of the drama, but personally I was not greatly impressed with any allegory that might have been hidden in the play. The action did not tempt me into generalisations. I found it more profitable to regard Carden Tyrrell's case as special rather than as typical, to consider his materially worthless heather field, which he ex-

pected sometime to be such a source of profit, merely as a heather field, and not as a symbol of a dreamer's impractical conception of life.

By refusing to be led into the fascinating and fantastic realms of speculation regarding life and world conditions that Mr. Martyn's play undoubtedly suggested, by sacrificing this pleasure of dreaming, one gained from the drama a distinct impression of reality. One saw the characters as possible men and women living a possible life. Unvexed by the question, what does it all mean, one could study and analyse Tyrrell and his wife and their companions as individuals, could perceive their humanity and their warring traits of character, could fathom their motives and ponder on the probable outcome of the dramatic conflict in which they were engaged.

In the case of an acted play, one must judge quickly from impressions. He has time to draw only the hastiest conclusions;

he cannot weigh fact against fact, nor hunt for hidden meanings. In the library he may discover behind the printed page a wealth of suggestion, a whole philosophy of life, but in the theatre he will learn — to his surprise and disappointment, possibly — that his interesting theories regarding the lesson that the author intended to teach really have very little bearing on the issue. Under these conditions, if he be wise and without obstinacy, he will toss aside his hypothesis and become receptive to that which the drama as acted has to give.

In "The Heather Field" I think that he would have found presented to him a vital human experience. He would have seen a husband and a wife temperamentally inharmonious, — the man delicate, refined, poetic, the woman narrow, commonplace, stubborn. With a person who understood and sympathised with him, such a man would have been as a child. But he had to be led; he would

not be driven. Sensitive to the slightest hint of ridicule, opposition aroused his obstinacy and created besides an active sense of injustice. In the instance illustrated in "The Heather Field," Tyrrell's impractical mind fixed on an impossible scheme of land drainage. He sunk his fortune in the hopeless project, and when he finally realised the failure of all his cherished ideals, his mind gave way under the accumulated strain.

The heather field was not the first cause of his troubles, however. It was, in fact, only a result. The real cause was his unfortunate marriage, his union with a woman mentally unsuited to him. Although Mr. Martyn weakened his case by throwing the fault in the face of the woman by making her marry Tyrrell for social position and without love, the incompatibility would have been the same had she felt for her husband the most sincere affection. She was absolutely incapable of catching his point of view,

and he was wholly beyond the influence of one who did not sympathise with him and understand him. The only person who thoroughly comprehended Tyrrell's peculiar disposition was Barry Ussher, his dearest friend, a practical man of affairs in every way, but a man, too, with imagination and with ideals. He knew as well as any one else the sure failure in store for Tyrrell's crazy land-reclaiming projects, but he also perceived what these plans meant to Tyrrell, how they had become, as it were, a part of the very fibre of his nature. To tear him rudely from them would be to endanger his reason. Ussher hoped to be able, by gentle means, in time to woo Tyrrell from his disastrous course, and had he been able to deal with Tyrrell free from the irritating opposition of wife and neighbours, he might have been successful in his work of salvation. Under the circumstances, however, Ussher was powerless. He could and did check for a time the fate that was

rushing Tyrrell toward mental collapse, but he could not destroy the conditions which brought that fate into existence, and which kept it continually active.

Tyrrell's insanity was pathetic, free from horror and morbidness. It was a release from his troubles rather than an affliction. His marriage became merely a dream, and he was again a young man, happy in his ideals, wandering joyously through a beautiful world hand in hand with his little brother Miles, translating for the child that understood him the thoughts and dreams of a speaking nature.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HENRY JEWETT.

As safe as any generalisation is the one that an actor is the poorest possible judge of a play. The reason for this is that he does not form his opinion of a play from the drama as a whole. He bases his conclusions on the part that he is going to play, or on the part that he thinks he would like to play. If that part suits him, the play is all right; if it does not, the play is forthwith damned beyond redemption as far as he is concerned. Regardless of his intelligence in other matters, his artistic attainments, his native good sense, and his cultivated instinct for theatrical effect, the actor cannot escape the blandishments of a part that, in the

HENRY JEWETT

As David McFarland in "The Greatest Thing in the World."

reading, seems to him to promise unusual effectiveness on the stage. He is hypnotised by it, and immediately forgets that one good character does not necessarily make a great play.

In the dramatisation of James Lane Allen's charming novel, "The Choir Invisible," Henry Jewett, whose judgment under ordinary conditions is to be relied upon, saw in John Gray a strong character that would demand, in the interpretation, versatility, sincerity, mental poise, virility, and power. He pictured himself as developing from John Gray a master creation of the actor's art. The more he studied the part the better he liked it, — liked it so well, indeed, that he lost sight entirely of the drama, in which John Gray was the main figure. The result was the rude awakening of a bitter failure, for John Gray had his being in an impossible play.

The great essential in the drama of psychological import is growth and development

of character. "The Choir Invisible" aimed to show how John Gray conquered his love for the forbidden woman, Jessica Falconer. The theme was unquestionably strong, and quite amenable to dramatic treatment under the proper conditions. But the dramatiser of "The Choir Invisible" made a fundamental mistake. She did not illustrate the mental processes by which John Gray mastered his passion. She gave the audience only results, which in themselves, divorced from the means and method of their accomplishment, had absolutely no dramatic interest.

Another striking example of the actor's proneness to judge a play by a part was the case of "Punchinello," which E. S. Willard produced in Boston in November, 1900, and which survived but four performances. In "Punchinello," Mr. Willard, the actor, was so fascinated by the cunning superficialities of the character of the player patriot, Andrea della Corona, that Mr. Willard, the manager,

overlooked entirely the deficiencies that were so glaringly in evidence in the play. Mr. Willard, the actor, saw in this leading part an opportunity for histrionism of the most spectacular sort, a chance to masquerade in many characters, to portray diverse and contrasting emotions, to make passionate love, and to sound the note of idealistic patriotism. He did not perceive, however, that Corona was only a prettily painted surface, that he had no soul, that he was strangely devoid of the slightest sympathetic quality. Nor did Mr. Willard learn, until it was too late to spare his mortification, that not a single character in "Punchinello" was endowed with life and vitality, that the drama itself was conspicuously commonplace in plot, and wretchedly weak in construction.

"The Choir Invisible," as dramatised by Frances Hastings, in private life Mrs. Henry Jewett, was originally produced in Washington, D. C., on October 13, 1899, but, after a

few weeks, performances of the work were discontinued. On October 3, 1900, the play was put on in Boston for a run, but in spite of the fact that many found the quiet, somewhat sentimental atmosphere of the piece enjoyable, the play proved in no sense a possibility on the stage. The first act of the play passed in Mrs. Falconer's garden, where were introduced, as leading personages, the flute-playing parson, the jesting O'Bannon, — the nearest approach to a villain in the drama, — the frivolous Amy Falconer, Mrs. Falconer, and John Gray. The second act pictured the ball at General Wilkinson's house, the jilting of Gray by Amy, and a theatrical climax in Gray's chastising of O'Bannon. The third act revealed an ingeniously arranged setting of Parson Moore's church, where Gray vividly described his fight with the panther, — a battle which was symbolic of his struggle and victory over his love for Mrs. Falconer. Mrs. Falconer's

garden was returned to in the last act, and the play ended with the parting of John Gray and Mrs. Falconer.

This final scene was one of much beauty and pathetic power, and it was acted by Mr. Jewett in a manner that was noble and inspiring, and at the same time delicate and appealing. If all the scenes between Gray and Mrs. Falconer had been as impressive and as emotionally suggestive as this single one, the verdict rendered on "The Choir Invisible" would have been wholly different. Mr. Allen's theme — the love of a man for a married woman and her love for him — was interesting, and thoroughly susceptible of strong dramatic treatment. It had the inherent value of instantly suggesting various possibilities and diverse conclusions. Mr. Allen's choice for a conclusion was the conventional one, the easiest one, and the safest one, of having the couple separate. F. Marion Crawford's choice, in the novel "To Lee-

ward," was to have the couple yield to their love, though he felt it necessary to paint this yielding as morally inexcusable, leaving one, however, with the impression that he was not wholly sincere in thus acting the worldly conventionalist. In "The Choir Invisible," the problem was not admitted as one over which any discussion were possible, an attitude which assured the drama its full measure of praise as ever sweet, clean, and pure.

Mr. Jewett presented a fine study of character in his impersonation of John Gray. Not altogether successful in establishing the illusion of light-hearted gaiety in the first act, he became, as the emotion deepened, firm in his grasp of the part, and strong, sincere, and impressive in his exposition. Finely contrasted with the struggling and embittered John Gray of the third act was the John Gray, walking firmly in the light, as shown in the last act. Finer even than this contrast was the subtle difference indi-

cated between the boyish happiness to be noticed in the John Gray of the first act and the fought-for peace of the man suggested at the end of the play.

When "The Greatest Thing in the World," by Harriet Ford and Beatrice DeMille, was produced at New Haven, Connecticut, on February 9, 1900, with Mrs. LeMoyne as star, Mr. Jewett created the character of the vigorously moral but thoroughly unlovely David McFarland. McFarland was the guardian of the younger son of Virginia Bryant, the character acted by Mrs. LeMoyne. He was in love with Mrs. Bryant, but she had refused to marry him. However, when the mother learned that McFarland, sticking closely to the letter of the law, without a thought of the higher right of mercy, proposed to prosecute her elder son for raising the value of a check, to save the boy, she told McFarland that she would become his wife. This sacrifice, however, served to

open the Scotchman's eyes to the smallness of the part that he had unconsciously been playing, and he changed from bigoted unworthiness to generous noble-heartedness. It was, barring an abruptness of development, an unusually strong acting part, which Mr. Jewett, by the effectiveness of his impersonation, raised to the dignity of an exhaustive study of character. Besides being a remarkably fine impersonation, — strong, comprehensive, and logical, — Mr. Jewett furnished in addition a pronounced instance of an actor's complete identification with his character. So perfect a disguise was his make-up, combined with his Scotch burr, that he was not recognised even by those thoroughly familiar with his appearance and his voice.

During the latter part of the season of 1900–01, while in the support of Ada Rehan, in Paul Kester's "Sweet Nell of Old Drury," Mr. Jewett, as Lord Jeffreys,

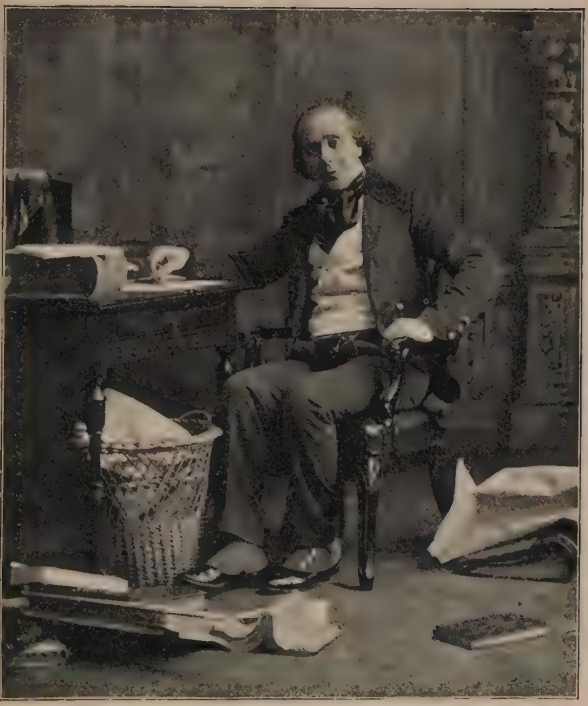
gave a similar example of skill in cloaking himself with the appearance and personality of the part that he was portraying. The character of Jeffreys was by itself of no great moment. It was conceived in an unvarying vein of theatrical brutality and cruelty, and the result was a Lord Jeffreys compared with whom the ordinary villain of ordinary melodrama was as a gentle cow mooing softly at sunset in anticipation of the evening milking. Mr. Jewett, however, gave the part a hint of a human personality, and he acted it with a vigour that radiated from a strong temperament, and with an understanding that comprehended even the suggestion of a vague quality of grim humour.

CHAPTER XIX.

EDWARD S. WILLARD.

I HAVE already proved to my own satisfaction that I had a perfect right, if it pleased me, to introduce English actors into a volume which was supposed to be devoted exclusively to American actors. Therefore, if any one wishes to know why I have dared to include so very English a gentleman as Edward S. Willard in my list of histrionic celebrities, I confidently refer him to the apology and explanation which will be found in the introduction to the article on John Hare.

Mr. Willard was born in Brighton in 1853, and made his first appearance on the stage at the Theatre Royal, Weymouth, as the



EDWARD S. WILLARD

As Tom Pinch in "Tom Pinch."

second officer in "The Lady of Lyons," on December 26, 1869. That was literally his first experience as an actor, for he did not have even the customary trying out as an amateur, which falls to the lot of most stage aspirants. For some time the youngster remained on the western circuit, as the Englishmen call it, and then he went as "responsible utility" to the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, where he met E. A. Sothern. At the first rehearsal of the farce "Dundreary Married and Settled," Mr. Willard happened to be the only member of the stock company that was familiar with his part. Sothern was so pleased at this that he engaged Willard, giving him such rôles as Captain de Boots in "Dundreary Married and Settled," Sir Edward Trenchard in "Our American Cousin," and Mr. Smith in "David Garrick." After he left Sothern, Mr. Willard returned to the stock companies, appearing in Plymouth, Scarborough, Belfast, Dublin, where

he got his first "chance" as John Ferne in "Progress;" Birkenhead, Newcastle, where he played William in "Black-eyed Susan;" Scarborough again, where he was seen as Blenkinsop in "An Unequal Match;" Sunderland, Newcastle, once more, where he first tried Romeo, Macduff, and Iago; and Bradford, where he acted such parts as Falconbridge in "King John," Wellborn in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," Hardress and the O'Grady in "Arrah na Pogue." At Bradford, he made a hit as Edmund in "King Lear," and this success, it is said, he is inclined to look upon as the first of his long line of villains.

On December 26, 1875, Mr. Willard made his first appearance in London, acting in the Covent Garden Alfred Highflyer in "A Roland for an Oliver." Subsequently he played Antonio to the Shylock of Charles Rice, and at the Crystal Palace acted Charles Courtley to the Dazzle of Charles Harcourt.

After this came another period in the provinces, to which time belong his Eugene Aram, his Orlando Middlemark in "A Lesson in Love," his Sydney Daryl in "Society," his Horace Holmcroft in "The New Magdalen," and his Robert Folliett in "The Shaughraun." Late in 1876, he played Hector Placide in "Led Astray," at a special engagement in Birmingham, and the following spring he joined the Joseph Eldred Company, with which he acted, at Glasgow in July, 1877, Dubosc and Lesurques in "The Lyons Mail." For seven months, beginning in the September following, Mr. Willard was leading man with Helen Barry, playing Macbeth, Claude Melnotte, Lord Clancarty, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Harcourt Courtley, and Arkwright in "Arkwright's Wife." He was seen in Liverpool as Benedick, and in Sunderland as Charles Surface. On tour with Edward Baker and Lionel Brough, he acted Young Marlowe, as well as Frank Annesley in

"The Favourite of Fortune," and he appeared successively as Ham and Peggotty in "Little Em'ly." In July, 1878, he began a three years' engagement with William Duck in such parts as Charles Middlewick in "Our Boys," Augustus Vere in "Married in Haste," Lionel Leveret in "Old Soldiers," and Jack Dudley in "Ruth's Romance." He created the part of Fletcher in Byron's "Uncle," brought out in Dublin, and he also appeared in a piece by Henry Arthur Jones called "Elopement."

In September, 1881, came Mr. Willard's engagement at the Princess's Theatre, London, and the first of the long line of gentlemanly villains with which his fame is so closely associated. Wilson Barrett was at the head of the company, and had just produced "Frou Frou," with Modjeska, and "The Old Love and the New," with Miss Eastlake as Lillian and himself as John Stratton.

Mr. Willard, after a performance of this play, met Henry Herman, who had formerly been acting manager for Helen Barry. He suggested that Mr. Willard be given the part of Clifford Armytage in "The Lights o' London," which was to be Mr. Barrett's next production. Mr. Barrett, who had seen Willard play a villain part at Hull, agreed to the engagement, and thus began an association that lasted nearly five years. As a matter of fact, Clifford Armytage was a poor part, and it may have been that the elaborate elegance of this villain's dress and manner were the desperate attempts of the actor to give some sort of distinction to a disappointing character. However this may have been, Mr. Willard's success was indisputable. Philip Royston in "The Romany Rye" carried Mr. Willard a little farther in reputation, and then came the Spider (Captain Skinner) in "The Silver King," easy, polished, and demoniac. The personality, as well as the

art, of the actor made a great impression, and Mr. Willard was from that moment an established fact in London theatricals.

His next part was Holy Clement in "Claudian," largely an elocutionary feat. The King in "Hamlet," and Sextus Tarquin in Bulwer Lytton's "The Household Gods," followed. This last was accounted one of the most finished of the Willard impersonations, rivalled only by his cynical Glaucias in "Clito," which was a triumph not only of acting but of make-up. As Mark Lezzard, in "Hoodman Blind," Mr. Willard gave a wholly fresh interpretation of villainy excited and sustained by lawless and ungovernable passion. The desperate struggle of the doomed wretch with the pursuing mob was said by those who saw it to have been horribly realistic. During his stay at the Princess's, Mr. Willard took part in several interesting afternoon performances outside of that theatre, playing such parts as Dunscombe Dunscombe

in "M. P.," Lord Ptarmigant in "Society," King William in "Lady Clancarty," De Vasseur in Miss Brunton's "Won by Honours," Rawdon Scudamore in "Hunted Down," in which Henry Irving made one of his earlier successes, Master Walter in "The Hunchback," "Tom Pinch," given at the Crystal Palace in February, 1883, the first part of a purely emotional kind that Willard had ever attempted; Wildrake in "The Love Chase," and Iachimo in "Cymbeline."

In 1886 Mr. Willard left Mr. Barrett and appeared at the Haymarket as James Ralston in "Jim the Penman," Tony Saxon in "Hard Hit," Geoffrey Delamayn in "Man and Wife." Tony Saxon was a new departure for Mr. Willard, as far as London was concerned, for it was an old man part, and a genial one at that. At matinées during this time Mr. Willard acted Captain Hawkesley in "Still Waters Run Deep," and Coranto in "The Amber Heart." After appearing

for a short time at the Gaiety as Gonzales, in "Loyal Love," Willard entered upon an engagement at the Olympic that brought forth still more studies in theatrical villainy. He represented successively Dick Dugdale in "The Pointsman," the Tiger in "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," Count Freund in "Christina," and Daniel in "To the Death."

In June, 1889, Mr. Willard became manager of the Shaftsbury, opening with a revival of "Jim the Penman," and following that on August 29th with the production of Henry Arthur Jones's "The Middleman." "Dick Venables" had a short life, giving way to the successful "Judah," another Jones play. Mr. Willard's first American tour began on November 10, 1890, at Palmer's Theatre, New York, in "The Middleman." After that date his visits were regular, and it was in this country during the season of 1897–98, that the actor broke down physically, and was compelled to retire from

active service for nearly three years, reappearing in the harness once more in Boston, on November 12, 1900, as David Garrick. During his American visits Mr. Willard's plays were "Wealth," by Henry Arthur Jones, "John Needham's Double," by Joseph Hatton, "A Fool's Paradise," by Sidney Grundy, "The Professor's Love Story," by J. M. Barrie, "The Rogue's Comedy," by Jones, "Hamlet," first acted in Boston on October 16, 1893, and universally counted a failure; "Tom Pinch," and "Punchinello," by Elwyn A. Barron, produced in Boston on December 3, 1900, and withdrawn after four performances never to be seen again.

Judging by the frequency with which he appears in it, Tom Pinch is one of Mr. Willard's favourite characterisations. The play, in which this Dickens creation has its being, is not a good one, -- it is fragmentary, episodical, incoherent. But these marring faults, oddly enough, do not prevent it from being

an interesting, even, at times, an absorbing entertainment. That, too, to one for whom the novel, "Martin Chuzzlewit," is unexplored territory. The interest that one found in "Tom Pinch" was due entirely to the presence of Pinch, and of the ever dramatic Mr. Pecksniff. What the other persons in the play did was absolutely of no consequence, — in fact, they were mere lay figures, and one was content to consider them as such. The events recorded in the play were equally unimportant. They did not impress one as the happenings of real life; they seemed like dream-stories, and again one was content. But with the simple, foolish, exasperatingly spiritless Tom Pinch, and with the marvellously well-poised and eminently self-centred Mr. Pecksniff, one was vitally concerned. They lived, — Tom Pinch because he represented one phase of martyrdom (and all the world, with fine sentimentality, in theory loves a martyr), and Mr. Pecksniff because he was

so flatteringly hypocritical. There is no one with any sense at all who can not read Pecksniff at a glance. Because one can understand him so readily and so thoroughly, Pecksniff appeals mightily to the understander's self-esteem. It gratifies one exceedingly to see this man, whom we know all along is a hypocrite, unmasked before the world. Yet the only thing that kept Pecksniff from being a great man was the lack of a sense of humour. He took himself too seriously. He did not himself realise what a gigantic fraud he was, and therefore he could not believe that there was the least chance of any one else finding him out. With the faintest trace of humour in his make-up Pecksniff would never have committed the blunder of believing in himself. He would have become too subtle for unmasking. He would have secured all of old Chuzzlewit's money; he would have made himself a power in the community; he would

have died honoured and respected, and have had a complimentary epitaph on his gravestone. Still, Pecksniff with a sense of humour would not have been Pecksniff.

The great charm of "Tom Pinch" on the stage was due entirely to the excellence of Mr. Willard's acting. Mr. Willard dodged with remarkable success the pitfalls of bathos and mawkishness that were everywhere apparent. He invested Tom Pinch with manliness, crowded him with sympathetic appeal, and never failed in the necessary attribute of convincing sincerity. Though one could scarcely realise it after submitting himself to the delights of Mr. Willard's impersonation, Tom Pinch was not a strong character dramatically. He was not the sort of man that would have inspired respect in real life. He was too passive, too non-resistent, and too effeminate. Fortunately, however, Mr. Willard kept this side of Tom Pinch's character very much in the back-

ground, and he succeeded in making the part pathetically real.

One of the most popular plays in the Willard repertory was J. M. Barrie's characteristic comedy, "The Professor's Love Story," which, notwithstanding the difference, reminded one strongly, possibly because of a similarity in sentiment and humour, of the same author's "The Little Minister." Mr. Willard was extremely effective as the absent-minded, but wholly lovable, Professor Goodwillie. What a remarkably fine bit of acting was that in the first act, when he pictured the distrait professor trying so futilely to interest himself in his work! With its wealth of detail, splendidly imagined, finely worked out, and always pertinent, the scene could scarcely have been better played than it was by Mr. Willard, who was as natural as life itself, and who, nevertheless, made sympathetically evident all the sweet fun in the untheatrical situation.

Although "A Rogue's Comedy" was not so well known as several other of his plays, it was as original and as unconventional a piece of dramatic writing as Henry Arthur Jones ever did. It showed less of vulgar cant than did many of his plays. "The Middleman," for instance, was a strong drama up to the last act. The mental anguish of Cyrus Blenkarn, the old potter, over the disgrace and disappearance of his daughter, led astray by the son of his wealthy employer, was realistically portrayed, and Blenkarn's crazy joy at the discovery of a method of firing crockery, which meant the ruin of his hard-fisted, stony-hearted employer, was sympathetically reflected in the spectator. So, too, one appreciated the fundamental justice of Blenkarn's relentless severity in exacting the last drop of anguish when he had in his power those who oppressed him; and one recognised also, that the only satisfactory solution

of the problem with which Mr. Jones was struggling, was the tempering of justice with mercy, — whole-souled, free-hearted forgiveness by Blenkarn of the wrongs of the past. So far, Mr. Jones was honest. But how weakly he brought about this idealistic solution! Without the slightest warning, and without any reason whatsoever, except that it helped Mr. Jones out of an embarrassing corner, in tripped the missing daughter waving a marriage certificate. That made everything perfectly "proper," and it was "Heaven bless you, my children," and a quick curtain.

"A Rogue's Comedy" proved how easily an ingenious playwright can compel the most circumspect of spectators to sympathise thoroughly with a villain and despise most heartily a virtuous young man, who is doing his best to earn an honest living and to win for his own the girl he loves. It was an odd state of affairs, for Bailey Prothero, the villain, whom one learned to admire so

much, was a first-class specimen of the wily confidence man. From notoriety acquired by unfolding the pasts of the nobility of old England, — by means of information slyly conveyed to him by his wife, to whom, by the way, he was idealistically devoted, — he arose to the dignity of promoting companies, the main purpose of which was to divorce the public from its money. He became in this way vastly wealthy, climbed into society, publicly wedded his own wife, and for a year was affluence itself. Then the foredoomed smash came, but even then the adroit Bailey was in a fair way of bluffing it out, had not the aforesaid virtuous young man, Bailey's own son at that, though the young man himself did not know it, crossed the adventurer's path with threatened exposure of Mr. Prothero's own unsavoury past. Bailey had a neat revenge on tap for the prying son. By declaring himself the boy's father, he could spoil the young fellow's love-story and cast him

down from the social and professional pedestal on which he thought himself so firmly established. But Bailey magnanimously did nothing of the sort. He assured the young man's future parents-in-law that the boy's father and mother were both dead, and then with a final "Buck up, old gal," to his doubly lawful spouse, gayly and triumphantly quitted the scene by means of the back-stairs. And right sorry one was to see him thus sent forth, for Bailey Prothero, with all his peccadilloes, was a true sportsman and an inveterate optimist.

In this peculiar and ever contradictory character, Mr. Willard's rare sincerity was of inestimable value. It made Prothero a thoroughly human and a very lovable rogue. Neither Mr. Jones nor Mr. Willard forced upon one this immoral condition — for although perfectly harmless, delight in the wicked Prothero was theoretically immoral — by glossing over Bailey's faults. Indeed,

both were at considerable pains to set these weaknesses prominently forth. One likes Bailey because, while practising hypocrisy and deception, he did not pose before himself as an honest man. There was absolutely nothing of the Pecksniff about him. His sense of humour was ever alert, and those whom he so shrewdly imposed upon were fully as much the victims of their own conceit, selfishness, and avarice, as they were of Prothero's wiles. Moreover, Bailey's last act, the voluntary resignation of his son, was one of supreme self-sacrifice. Mr. Willard's impersonation of this splendid part marked the height of his artistic career.

LOUIS MANN

As Franz Hochstuhl in "All on Account of Eliza."

CHAPTER XX.

LOUIS MANN.

ALTHOUGH Louis Mann is best known by his Hans Nix in the frivolous musical farce, "The Telephone Girl," he is entitled to higher rank in the theatrical profession than that of musical comedy buffoon, or even German comedian. In spite of the fact that Mr. Mann has been content to limit his impersonations to a single line of characters, he is, nevertheless, distinctly a low comedian as distinguished from a trader on comic instinct. He creates, which is an entirely different thing from putting on a ludicrous facial disguise and wearing strange-looking clothes. That Mr. Mann habitually does both these latter things is true, and in addi-

tion he juggles with the English language in a manner wholly indescribable; but he acts, too. He projects a personality; he gives an impression of individuality; and he has pathetic as well as comic power.

Born and brought up in New York City, Mr. Mann started forth as an actor in the strictly legitimate way, barn-storming through New England. "We had a company of only half a dozen," remarked Mr. Mann, "but that did not prevent us from inflicting 'Camille' on the long-suffering public of such Maine towns as Houlton, Presque Isle, Fort Fairfield, and Caribou. We roamed around among the small places, and when we struck Calais and Eastport, we felt as if we were indeed entering metropolises. I played everything, from Hamlet down. I shall never forget one night in Maine, or rather the building in which we played, for the name of the town has long since escaped me. We acted in Dinsmore's barn, and the owner had to

take out the horses and cattle and place them in a side stall before the performance could be started. The boys were up in the hayloft, which made an admirable gallery.

"That night the drama was 'Camille,' and my part was Armand. In the midst of the most pathetic scene Mr. Dinsmore's mule began to bray. The farmer was out of the 'opera-house,' as he declared he did not want to see the play-acting; and they had to send out for him. He came in all excited, and for a little while we had a two-ringed circus instead of a tragedy. Then he insisted that the animal was sick and that the actors and spectators must get out. His mule, he declared, was not going to suffer while the crowd enjoyed itself. Camille did not die that night, but we came near doing it before we got back to civilisation, for that broke up the show, and the manager took his scenery, going in one direction, while we took another, travelling over the roads in a bouncing

buckboard, building the stage wherever we played, and getting much experience but little money."

Mr. Mann's first important engagement was with Daniel Bandmann in "Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Mr. Mann acting Mr. Utterson. That was in 1888. Then came "Incog.," with Charles Dickson, Lillian Burkhardt, and Clara Lipman. The eccentric professor of music in "The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown" was followed by the long runs of "The Girl from Paris" and "A Telephone Girl." On October 9, 1899, in Baltimore, Md., Mr. Mann was seen for the first time as the Frenchman in "The Girl in the Barracks." "Master and Pupil," a comedy adapted from the German by Sydney Rosenfeld, was produced at the Park Theatre, Boston, on March 19, 1900, with Mr. Mann as Vollmar. During the season of 1900–01 Mr. Mann was seen as Franz Hochstuhl in Leo Ditrichstein's three-act farce, "All on

Account of Eliza," which was originally produced in Bridgeport, Conn., on August 23, 1900.

A vast reservoir of humour was Louis Mann's Hans Nix in "A Telephone Girl," and no one who saw the show is likely ever to forget his painfully funny conversation over the telephone with Sing Sing prison, or his strenuous endeavours to find out "Vere are der fires?" the last word in Mann's dialogue meaning "wires." The show itself was bright and lively, bubbling and frivolous, with not an iota of the evil lurking in it that some persons were at such pains to point out. Many of the lines were really witty, and the music was catchy to an extent almost disconcerting. Hans Nix passed for a German, but in reality he was complexedly cosmopolitan. His tongue was, possibly, German, but his legs were Irish, and his arms and hands were French. When a German gesticulates he does it as if he had a beer-mug in one

hand. Hans Nix, on the contrary, did at least half his talking with his hands, and he was as excitable as an Italian. There was comparatively little pure comic instinct in this character creation, and a great deal of conscious comedy effect. Mr. Mann always had a finger on the pulse of his audience, and he was continually experimenting with his spectators. One evidence of this was his extraordinary use of make-up. Looking at his face, one was instantly reminded of a pig. It was a carefully fostered resemblance, and Mr. Mann often utilised it to provoke a laugh, for instance, by puckering up his lips as if to whistle, and then suddenly beaming forth with a broad grin. There were traces of the looking-glass in Mr. Mann's work.

"Master and Pupil" was not a success, but there were dramatic possibilities in the main theme of the play that made it worthy of a degree of attention. In addition, the character of Vollmar gave Mr. Mann his first

opportunity to prove that he was a comedian in the full sense of the word. The play had to do with Jane Anderson, a young woman of exceptional musical talent. This child — for mentally she was little more than a child — had all the capriciousness, all the emotional sensitiveness attendant upon a richly endowed artistic temperament. Life was for her either all laughter or all tears. She knew no happy medium. Love came to her as a revelation. It was an ecstasy, a wonderful sensation. Merely to love and to be loved was the all in all. For the time being, it mattered nothing to her that the man who had aroused this sentiment in her was betrothed to another woman. Childishly ignorant of life as she was, she did not consider consequences. She lived only in the present.

In spite of herself, however, the inevitable conflict was thrust upon her. Should it be love, or should it be art? Whatever her

choice, a real sacrifice was involved. Yet with her temperament she could choose but one way. She must cling to her art. That was herself. That was her life. She could not exist without it. Love, on the other hand, was beautiful to her only as an ideal. In all its freshness and joyousness it did, indeed, seem paramount. Under its influence her nature expanded, the world appeared brighter and more lovely, and her art gained by the broadening influence. Though she did not know it, she loved, not so much the man, as the passion he inspired. Her affection was an attribute, not essential fibre of her character. Nothing would have proved so fatal to this love as the humdrum of married life.

So near did Sydney Rosenfeld come to writing or adapting a really worthy play. Several elements entered in, however, to rob him of complete success, but none more prominently than his own limitations as a dramatic

author. He was not able fully to grasp the possibilities of his theme nor to appreciate its exceptional value as a means for the exposition of character. Unfortunate, moreover, was his attempt to localise his action in New York, or anywhere else for that matter. The plot itself was entirely independent of locality, and it was distinctly disillusionising to hear New York references from the lips of personages who were, even after Mr. Rosenfeld had redressed them, strongly suggestive of frankfürters and beer.

The play was carelessly put together as well, and at least half the characters were in no respect concerned in the action. Six at the utmost were all that were required for the play, as Mr. Rosenfeld imagined it. Yet he had twelve in his cast. This lack of economy was partly due to the dramatist's apparent doubt regarding what form his work would take, — whether it would turn out a farce or a comedy. When the farcical tend-

encies of the early moments of the first act were lost in the genuine comedy that the dramatic theme forced on Mr. Rosenfeld, perhaps against his own will, the excess baggage in the way of characters rapidly disappeared. By the time the last act was well under way only four personages were left. And on those characters the fate of the play hung.

Robert Vollmar, Jane's music-teacher, whose whole heart was centred in her artistic future, was an exceptionally strong conception, one in every way worthy of the comedy that Mr. Rosenfeld might have written with the material he had at hand. As one would naturally expect, Mr. Mann's unusual talent for eccentric character drawing gave the part a distinct personality. But he went a step farther than merely to individualise; he humanised Vollmar. He gave him a heart, a living self, and he surrounded him with an atmosphere so charged with pathetic power that one was simply amazed when he remembered that the

actor who created these effects had heretofore been identified almost exclusively with the wild extravagances of farce and burlesque.

Hans Nix, in "The Telephone Girl," was burlesque, — he was mainly a theatrical conception; Hochstuhl, in "All on Account of Eliza," was low comedy, — he suggested a living possibility. And still, they were practically the same person, for Mr. Mann is not a versatile actor. The player is more than a mere photographer of human nature, — more than a reproducer of conventional types, — he is a creator, an originator, a vivifier, an expounder. By means of his art and through the interpreting agent of his own personality, he illustrates human nature. The actor does not mimic life, but he produces in the minds of those that come under his influence an impression of life. Thus it was with Mr. Mann's Hochstuhl. The character was not even remotely a type; it was something far better, — an individual.

Probably there never was a school board chairman in this country just like Hochstuhl, but the Hochstuhl shown by Louis Mann had reality enough, vitality enough, and rich humour enough to outweigh this consideration. Few of us ever expected to get from Mr. Mann anything funnier than his Hans Nix. But the Hochstuhl proved to be the unexpected. Funnier than Hans Nix, Hochstuhl certainly was, and at the same time he was far less of a pure clown than was Hans Nix. A Hans Nix never was seen in real life, but a Hochstuhl might be, — a blind difference, but a distinct one, nevertheless. Moreover, Hochstuhl wore well. He was on the stage the greater part of three acts, and not once did he suggest boredom. How great praise of Mr. Mann this simple statement of fact is can only be appreciated by trying to imagine how one would feel after experiencing two hours of any other stage Dutchman.

CHARLES F. RICHMAN.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARLES J. RICHMAN.

CHARLES J. RICHMAN was born in Chicago in 1870. At an early age he entered mercantile life, and subsequently studied law. He was always partial to theatricals, however, and was a member of most of the prominent dramatic clubs of Chicago. His devotion to amateur acting, and the many demands upon his time by social engagements, worked havoc with his legal studies. In 1890, he determined to make acting his business. Going to New York alone and unknown, and without previous professional experience, he secured an engagement as leading man with a travelling melodramatic company. His first New York appearance

was made with James A. Herne, Mr. Richman playing Philip Fleming, in Mr. Herne's drama, "Margaret Fleming," when that play was produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

After that Mr. Richman acted the part of the Stranger in the Rosenfelds' production of "Hannele." This led to his engagement by A. M. Palmer for his stock company, and during the season of 1894–95 Mr. Richman played in "New Blood," "The New Woman," "Esmeralda," and supported Mrs. Langtry in "Gossip." In the fall of 1895 he succeeded Maurice Barrymore as the leading man of the Stockwell Stock Company of San Francisco, and after that was engaged by Augustin Daly for his company. Regarding his connection with Mr. Daly, Mr. Richman said, in an interview:

"The newspapers, not Mr. Daly, made me leading man of Daly's Theatre. I had been playing with Mrs. Langtry in 'Gossip' at Wallack's. This was in the spring of 1895,

and her manager wished to engage me for the next season. I told him I wanted to be in a new production, but on his assuring me that one would be made during the winter, I signed the contract and went off home to Chicago, easy in my mind for the summer. But with September came a brief word that Mrs. Langtry had changed her plans and was not coming to America. This threw me out of an engagement after all other openings of any worth had been filled. I felt pretty blue. I had played in New York with Annie Russell in 'New Blood' and 'Esmeralda,' and I did not want people there to forget all about me. Besides, it was a question of bread and butter to get something to do.

"And just here luck, which, I claim, plays a good share in an actor's advancement, stepped into my front dooryard. Maurice Barrymore had been acting during the summer with the Stockwell Company in San

Francisco, but he was wanted to create the lead in 'The Heart of Maryland;' so he came East, and I went West to take his place. The first thing I played in was 'Diplomacy.' But after all the long journey I only remained in California two weeks. Georgia Cayvan was going to star, and the post of leading man was offered me. I lost little time in getting back to New York, only to be met with another crushing blow. Miss Cayvan had been taken to a sanitarium, and her tour had been abandoned. Here were two knockouts for me inside of as many months.

"I went to Charles Frohman. 'Yes,' he said, 'I can place you, but not till next season.' But meantime I had to live. I haunted the agencies, and through one of them Mr. Daly obtained my address and sent for me. He had seen me act under Mr. Palmer's management. I went to Daly's and had my interview with its manager. We

finally came to terms, — of course, I was eager to get the opening at his theatre, but equally, of course, I did not care to let him know it. Frank Worthing was leading man, and I was engaged to do anything that came along.

"For awhile nothing came my way. I was under salary, but this was poor consolation to the ambitious actor. At last, however, Mr. Daly had a part that he must have regarded as suited to my personality, and he cast me for Bruno von Neuhof in the 'Countess Glucki.' Worthing was not in the bill. And how Mr. Daly worked with me at rehearsals — literally worked! He would take hold of me and bend my body in just the pose he wished me to assume with certain speeches, swaying me back and forth as if I were a reed. The first night came. I was the last principal to go on; all the others had had their reception. I appeared, and there was not a hand. My first bit was

a little scene with Sidney Herbert, and there was applause after that, which, of course, was much more satisfactory to me than any reception would have been. The next morning every paper in New York called me Daly's new leading man.

"Mr. Daly did not like it at all. In fact, he did not wish to have any leading man. He was still hurt over John Drew's defection, and he did not want to give another man the power to touch him again in the same way. His idea was to have both Worthing and myself, — or any two men, for that matter, — casting us as he saw fit. 'Glucki' ran out the season, and then we went on tour. Mr. Daly tried to leave me out of bills, but I would not submit. I told him I was quite willing to quit the company if he so desired, but as long as I was with him and could play the parts, I wanted them. Worthing, in the meanwhile, had resigned and gone with Maxine Elliott. In that light

affair, 'Number Nine,' Mr. Daly wanted to give the lead to Cyril Scott, but again I was successful in protesting.

"We used to have the most tremendous arguments over the thing. Sometimes, though, it was all on my side, for I have gone into Mr. Daly's office to have my say, and said it, even though he kept his hands over his ears all the time. Still, I am pretty well convinced that he heard me all the same. And yet, in spite of all, we were good friends, and I had the highest regard for him. He was one of the three managers to whom I owe a big debt of gratitude for training received at their hands. After Mr. Daly's death came an offer from Klaw and Erlanger to star me, but there was the stumbling-block of a play. We could not find a suitable one. Finally it was suggested that some one should go to Charles Frohman and ask him if he had anything on hand that would serve. He had not, but he sent for me. I knew

by the way he began his talk that he was going to ask me to do something I would not want to do. What he did offer me was the post of leading man to Annie Russell; and I certainly did object to supporting any star.

"'Can't you give me anything else?' I asked. 'Stick me in the middle of some special company, where I can have an even chance?'

"Mr. Frohman's only reply was a smile. Then he said, handing me a manuscript, 'Here, go into that room and read this play. It was written for John Drew, but I am going to use it for Annie Russell. Don't make any decision until you have read it.'

"Well, I sat down and read the play through, and when I had finished I came to Mr. Frohman with the exclamation, 'Oh, yes, I'll play that part quick enough.'

"'I thought you would,' he said. The play

was 'Miss Hobbs,' although at that time it had no name.

"That was the beginning of my connection with Charles Frohman, the third manager who has helped me. The first was James A. Herne. Giving to each the special credit due, I should put Mr. Herne down as the realist, Mr. Daly as past master in teaching comedy of the old school, and Mr. Frohman as the possessor of the keenest dramatic instinct. From Mr. Herne I learned the trick I still employ of writing out and committing to memory certain lines to say to myself at important crises in the play, while listening to the person who is talking to me. For instance, in 'Mrs. Dane's Defence,' when Miss Anglin was making her long speech of confession, I repeated to myself, 'And this is the woman my boy loves! I cannot give him to her, and yet, if I refuse my consent, it will break his heart.' With these thoughts in mind, I kept keyed up in the story, ready

to look my cue, as well as speak it, when it came.

"I am not very old, and yet it has been my fortune to serve under three of the managers who have written their names large in the history of the contemporary stage, — Palmer, Daly, and Charles Frohman. Mr. Frohman is a man who is perhaps more talked about and less known to the public than any other individual of equal prominence. As I have said, he possesses the keenest scent for a dramatic situation, always making changes for the better, not for the mere purpose of showing that he has the power to do so. I remember, in 'Miss Hobbs,' where the prompt-book called for the blowing of a fog-horn in the yacht scene. The sound was supposed to come from some other vessel. 'No,' Mr. Frohman said. 'Bring your horn on the stage, and have it blown where the audience can see it for itself and know what the sound comes from.' And

it turned out to be one of the most effective bits in the act. To be sure, he and I disagreed over my make-up in 'Mrs. Dane's Defence.' I had a beautiful wig prepared which would have made me look the judge, but Mr. Frohman declared that he did not wish me to disguise myself, and I dare say that he was right, from his point of view."

In the Augustin Daly production of "Cyrano de Bergerac," Mr. Richman played the title part, which, however, was cut considerably for the benefit of Roxane, acted by Ada Rehan. Cyrano is like Hamlet, in that, while it is exceedingly difficult to give a great performance of the character, it is also practically impossible for any reasonably capable actor absolutely to fail in the part. Mr. Richman's was a good impersonation, especially in the balcony scene, where he conveyed restrained passion exceedingly well with the voice alone. Mr. Richman's Wolff Kingsearl, in Jerome K. Jerome's "Miss

Hobbs," was a broad and complete characterisation. It left an impression of strength, virility, and manliness; in short, of just the sort of man to overcome the prejudices of a dainty feminine creature like Miss Hobbs, who thought herself too sensible ever to fall in love or do such a commonplace thing as marrying.

In the fall of 1900 Mr. Richman appeared with Annie Russell as Prince Victor of Kurland in Capt. R. Marshall's "A Royal Family." This was followed by his impersonation of the judge in "Mrs. Dane's Defence," with the Empire Theatre Company. In the spring of 1901 he acted Julian Beauclerc, in "Diplomacy," with the Empire Theatre Company. His Julian was a well rounded presentation of the part, though not one sufficiently strong in personality to overcome the essential artificiality and theatricalism of the Sardou conception. His Julian never for a moment deceived one into believing

that it ever had an existence outside of a play. It was good acting, at that, — strong acting, indeed, if one were content to regard acting wholly from the pictorial side.

THE END.

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